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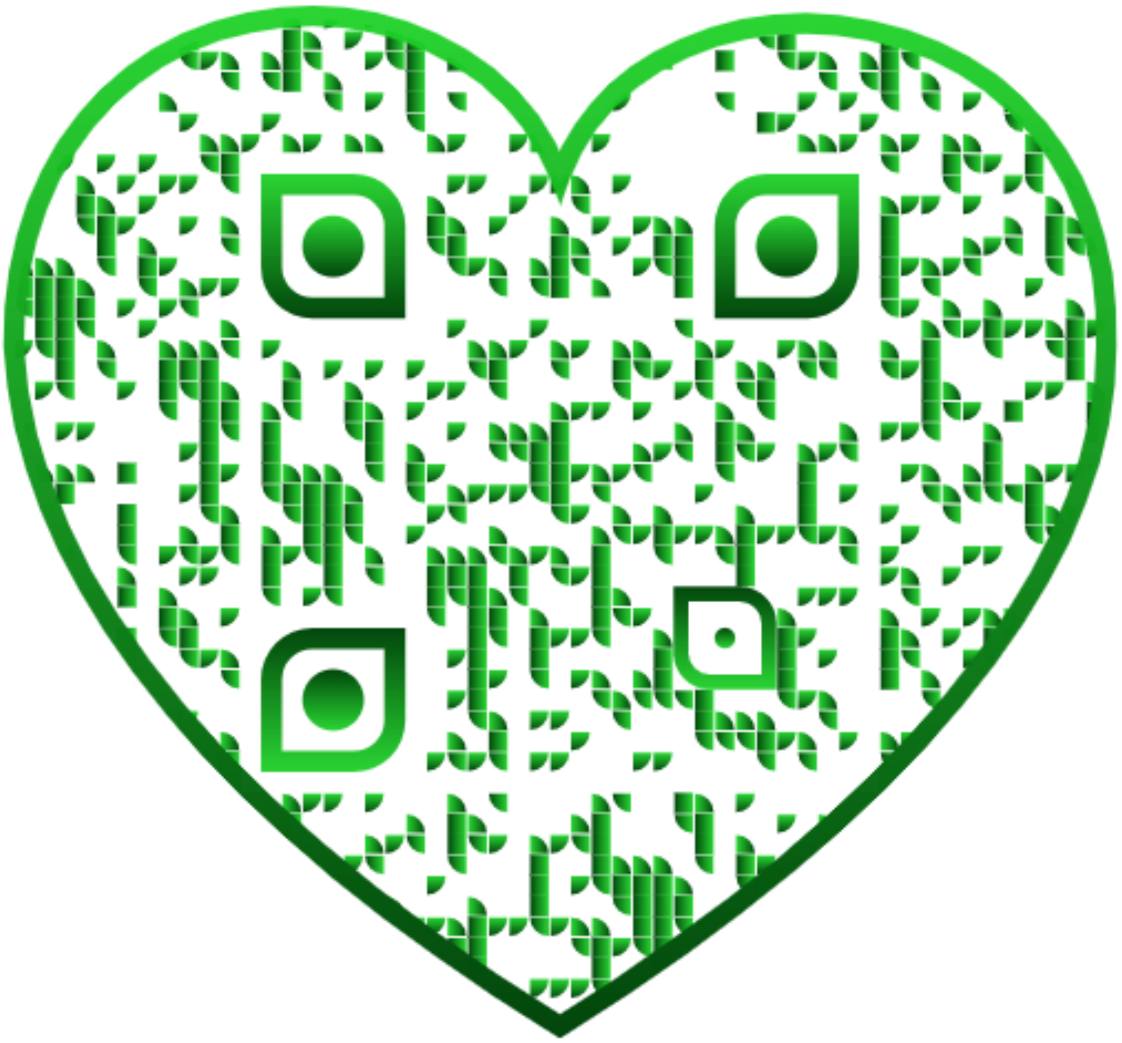

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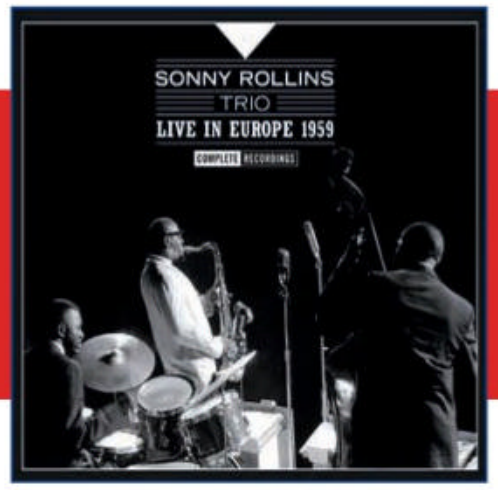

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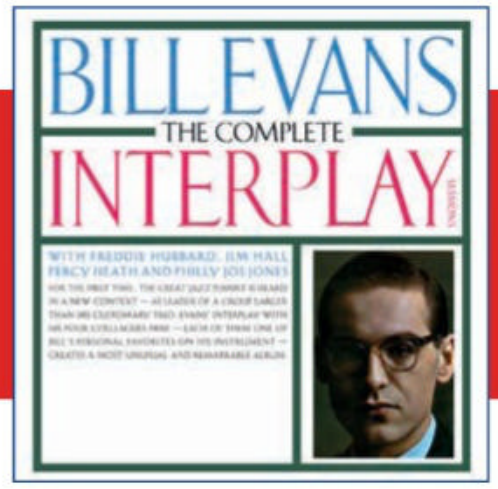

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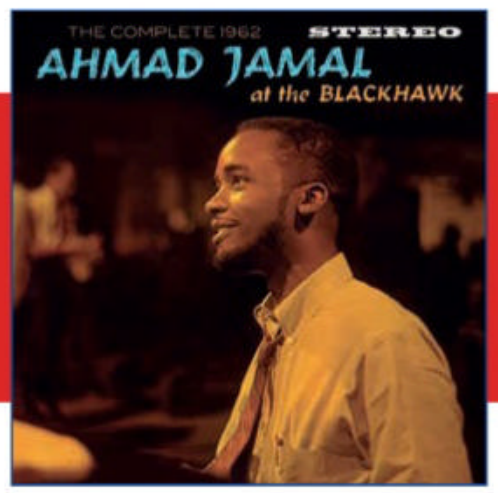

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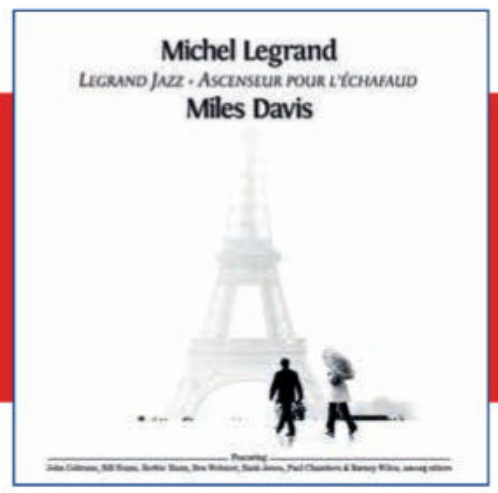

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Photo by Gulnara Khamatova

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News

By Mike Flynn, Kevin Whitlock and Jon Newey

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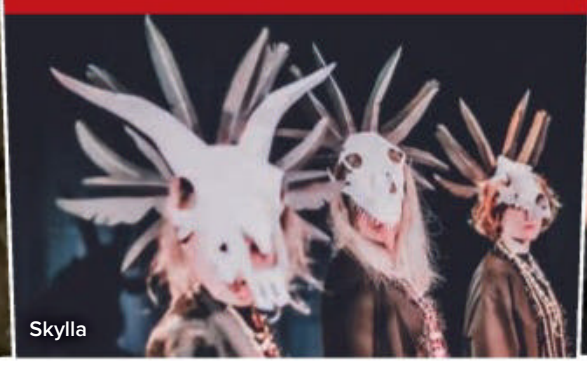
Fergus McCreadie


Skylla

Gregory Porter

Fergus McCreadie, Ruth Goller's Skylla, Lizz Wright and Gregory Porter confirmed for Cheltenham Jazz Festival 2023 line-up

As *Jazzwise* was going to press the first names were confirmed for the 2023 edition of the Cheltenham Jazz Festival, which will take place across six days and nights on 26 April to 1 May. Top international artists and the cream of the current UK scene will perform alongside a richly varied selection of exciting Europeans and stars from the US at the festival's venues that include the Big Top, Jazz Arena, Parabola Arts Centre, Town Hall, as well as the publicly accessible Free Stage in the Montpellier Gardens festival site and at participating venues around the picturesque Cotswold spa town.

Among the first names announced will be the return of the hugely successful vocal star Gregory Porter, who is back as Artistic Curator. Also confimed is pianist Fergus MacCreadie who will appear fresh from his 2022 Mercury Prize-shortlisted album nomination and wins for Scottish Album of The Year and JazzFM Instrumentalist of the Year, while another festival favourite returns with acclaimed American jazz-soul vocalist Lizz Wright set to perform. The festival's left-field European programme is off to a strong start with compelling Norwegian guitar soundscaper Stian Westerhus performing twice, solo and with the CollapseUncollapse improv duo of drummer Mark Sanders and bass guitarist/effects man Chris Mapp. Acclaimed vocal trio Skylla, led by bassist Ruth Goller and featuring Lauren Kinsella and Alice Grant, and the multi-faceted duo of Black Top, featuring Orphy Robinson on vibes and electronics and Pat Thomas on piano, with special guest (and BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year winning saxophonist) Xhosa Cole are also on the bill. Further names will be announced soon – *Jazzwise* is festival media partner. **For more info and tickets visit www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/jazz**

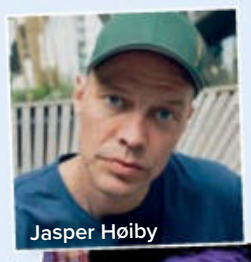
Cambridge Jazz Fest 2022 returns with Jasper Høiby, Rebello/Garland, Courtney Pine/Zoe Rahman, Jazz in the Round and much more

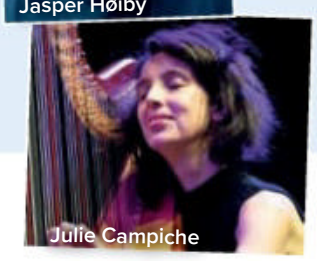
The Cambridge Jazz Festival returns with a strong line-up from in mid-to-late November packing in two weeks of headline shows, talks and workshops from a variety of leading UK and international acts. Among the numerous highlights will be bassist Jasper Høiby's Planet B trio playing new music from their latest album *What It Means To Be Human* (see review on page 38) – on a double bill with talented jazz-folk-fusion four-piece Lydian Collective (17 Nov, Cambridge Junction); Swiss harpist Julie Campiche stops off on one of her three UK dates at the Gonville Hotel (17 Nov), while there are a series of intimate solo and duo performances from Ashley Henry (solo, 18 Nov, St Catherines' College); Tim Garland & Jason Rebello (25 Nov, Stapleford Granary); Courtney Pine's Spirituality featuring Zoe Rahman (25 Nov, Saffron Hall) and Zara McFarlane (duo, 26 Nov, Frankopan, Jesus College).

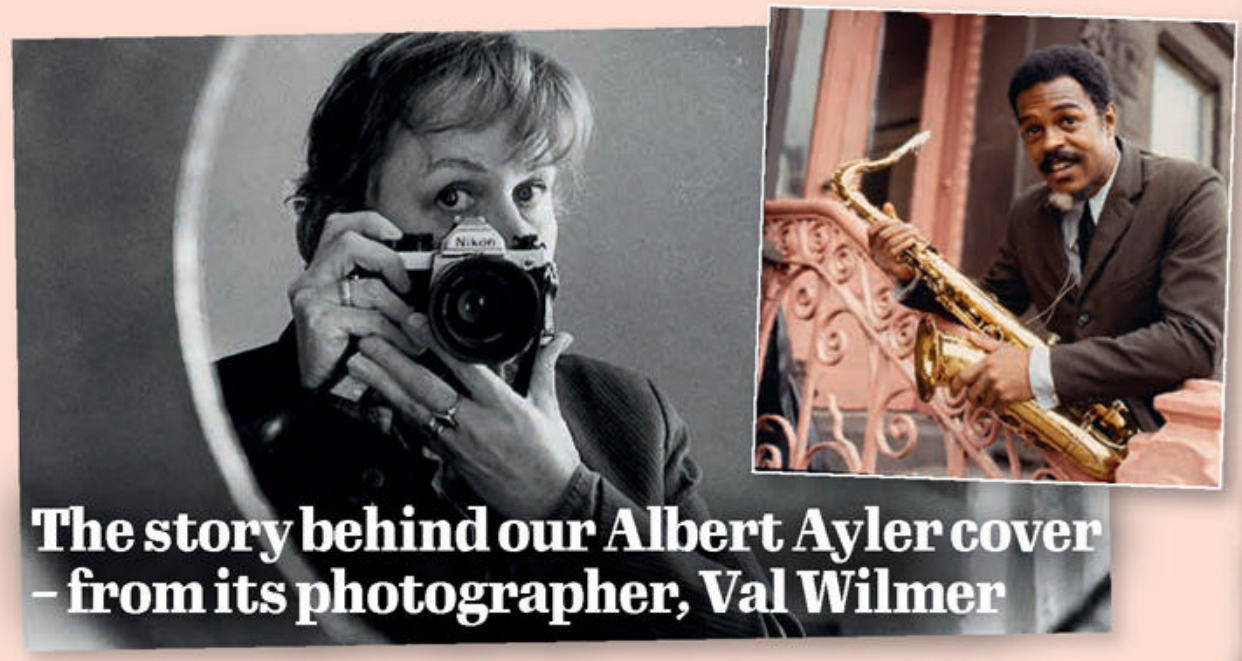
Further highlights include the acclaimed 'Jazz In The Round' sessions – curated by broadcasters Chris Philips and Jez Nelson – who present an exciting triple bill of jazz harpist Alina Bzhezhinska with her HipHarp Collective, jazz-fusion from vocalist Rouhangeze and keys virtuoso Tomasz Bura, and the high-flying new collaborative project from guitarist Ant Law and saxophonist Alex Hitchcock (19 Nov, St Andrew's Street Baptist Church). Bassist (and also *Jazzwise* scribe and Radio 3 presenter) Alyn Shipton brings his New Orleans Friends band to the festival (19 Nov, St Andrew's Street Baptist Church) with the gig preceded by a Q&A session about his recent book, *On Jazz: A Personal Journey*, with interviewer Adrian Cox (6-7pm).

The latter is among the festival's talks and workshop programme that also includes Sonita Alleyne OBE & Orphy Robinson MBE's 'Developing your Creative Practice' plus Jazz workshops from top saxophonist Tim Garland, and bandleader/arranger Pete Churchill. Rising star drummer Jas Kayser also appears with her talented band (19 Nov, Clare College Cellars, Clare College) while leading UK soul-jazz vocalist Omar brings his QCBA band (aka Quentin Collins and Brandon Allen), to close out the festival in style on Sunday 27 November at Frankopan Hall, Jesus College.

For the full line-up and tickets visit www.cambridgejazzfestival.info


Jasper Høiby


Julie Campiche



The story behind our Albert Ayler cover – from its photographer, Val Wilmer

"It was 1966 and Albert Ayler wanted me to take some pictures of him and his brother Donald. They were staying with a relative, opposite St Nicholas Park, so we took the subway to Harlem. They wore matching checked suits with a greenish tinge, emphasised by the Ektachrome film I was using. Albert posed prettily, lounging against one of the massive brown rocks in the park. I shot the best part of a roll of film on my Rolleiflex, then another three frames on the steps of their building. Inside I switched to a 35mm Pentax loaded with black-and-white film, permitting greater intimacy and giving a documentary quality to these now famous photographs." **Val Wilmer**

2022 Jazz FM Awards winners announced

The winners of the Jazz FM Awards 2022, with PPL and PRS for Music, were announced at an awards ceremony at Shoreditch Town Hall on Thursday, 20 October. The big winner of the night was fast-rising Scottish jazz singer **Georgia Cécile** who took home two awards for Vocalist of the Year and UK Jazz Artist of the Year (voted for by the public), which follows widespread acclaim for her 2021 album, *Only The Lover Sings*, and increasingly high-profile live performances, supporting Gregory Porter for four nights at the Royal Albert Hall, and at Love Supreme Jazz Festival among others this year.

Further winners included saxophonist **Chelsea Carmichael** – Breakthrough Act Of The Year; vocalist **Lady Blackbird** – International Jazz Act Of The Year; singer **Mica Millar** – Soul Act Of The Year; American blues guitarist and singer **Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram** – Blues Act Of The Year; pianist **Fergus McCreadie** – Instrumentalist Of The Year; the Questlove-directed music documentary ***Summer of Soul*** – The Digital Award; jazz electronica duo **Blue Lab Beats** – Innovation Award; and trumpeter/producer **Emma-Jean Thackray**'s album *Yellow* was voted Album Of The Year in the second public vote category.

The three special awards were presented with US bassist **Marcus Miller** – known for his tenure as Miles Davis' producer for the last decade of the iconic trumpeter's career, and as a hugely successful solo artist and in-demand producer – taking home the Gold Award; **Jools Holland**, the renowned blues-boogie woogie pianist and presenter of his long-running BBC show *Later...*, received the Impact Award, and internationally acclaimed singer **Norma Winstone** was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her immense contribution to jazz for the last six decades.

Presented by actor Clarke Peters (best known for his roles as Lester Freamon in the hit television series *The Wire* and Albert Lambreaux in TV series *Treme*) the individual awards were presented by Peter Leathem from PPL and Andrea Gray from PRS For Music, Binker Golding, Theo Coker, Mark King, Tom Watson, Judith Owen, Alina Bzhezhinska, Marcus Brigstocke, Guy Barker, Leee John, P.P. Arnold, MF Robots and Hugh Laurie.

For more info visit www.jazzfmawards.com

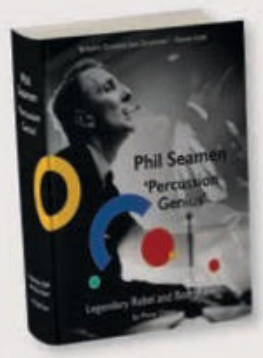
Clockwise from top right: Chelsea Carmichael, Georgia Cécile, Marcus Miller, Norma Winstone, Jools Holland and Hugh Laurie and the Fergus McCreadie Trio

Editor's Note

It's perhaps a cliché to say that music is as perennial as the grass, but at times like these it's nothing short of miraculous that the UK and international jazz scenes continue to flourish despite the devastating headwinds we're now facing. If 2022 has been a year of chaos and confusion, then October went into overdrive with governmental meltdown and the sort of economic turbulence few of us have ever known. Thus, surveying our Albums of the Year Critics Polls - for both New Releases and Reissue/Archive albums from the last year – it's been something of a purple patch for jazz. What's striking to me, is that jazz artists are increasingly less concerned about adhering to the genre itself - yet simultaneously embracing tradition alongside innovation.

Whether it's Cécile McLorin Salvant's prescient reworking of 'Wuthering Heights' from her March released LP *Ghost Song* (who knew Kate Bush would be the biggest artist of 2022 thanks to *Stranger Things*?!), or Fergus McCreadie's thrilling jazz take on Scottish folk, Tigran Hamasyan's mind-blowing deconstruction of the Great American Songbook or Terri Lyne Carrington's female-focused *New Standards* project, jazz renews and rebuilds itself once again. Thanks for your ongoing support in such trying times.
Mike Flynn, Editor, *Jazzwise*

Phil Seamen 'Percussion Genius', extensive biography just published



Fifty years after his death, a major biography of British drum legend Phil Seamen has just been published. Written by Peter Dawn, who hails from Seamen's hometown of Burton-on-Trent, *Phil Seamen 'Percussion Genius' - Legendary Rebel and Born Raver* is a richly-illustrated, 750 page hard back epic tracing Seamen's colourful and ultimately tragic life as an exceptionally talented kingpin of the UK jazz scene. From his early semi-professional drumming career in Derbyshire through to post-war big bands, the hot-bed of 1950s/60s Soho with Ronnies Scott, Tubby Hayes and Joe Harriott bands, to working with Alexis Korner and Ginger Baker's Airforce, Dawn has spent many years researching and writing this hugely immersive study of Seamen's work, life, drug problems, fellow musicians and the culturally charged times he lived and played through. Packed with over 300 photos and a foreword by Charlie Watts, the book is now available for £45 plus P&P from **www.philseamen.com**

Whirlwind signs Kira Linn as part Step Forward, Reach Back programme

UK-based indie label Whirlwind Recordings has announced the first female artist, German baritone saxophonist/singer Kira Linn (pictured above), to receive support as part of its 'Step Forward, Reach Back' one-year programme to support emergent female talent, across all ages, on their roster. Her new album, *Illusion*, is set to be released on 7 April 2023. Commenting on her music, Linn said: "The album reflects emotions and thoughts that arose in a time of loneliness, silence and uncertainty. During this period, I learned to enjoy the deceleration, and set out to discover and try out new things."

Linn has released two albums with her sextet, Linntett, which features herself on baritone sax, bass clarinet and vocals with Christopher Kunz (tenor/soprano sax); Nino Wenger (alto sax/alto flute/flute); Lukas Großmann (piano, Rhodes, synth); Lukas Keller (electric bass) and Johannes Koch (drums). For this latest release they explore neo-soul and electronic sounds alongside jazz with Linn adding vocals for the first time to the mix. **For more info visit www.whirlwindrecordings.com/tag/kira-linn/**

We Out Here Festival announces new home at Wimborne St Giles

The mid-August new jazz jamboree that is We Out Here has announced its new home for next summer's edition which will be at Wimborne St. Giles, Dorset for a four-day mix of live music and club culture from 10 to 14 August. Having previously taken place in Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire, for the last three events, the festival embarks on a new chapter in an idyllic new site; unfurling within 400 acres of lush parkland in the South-West of England. The festival will be based within the Grade II listed grounds of St Giles House, a nature-filled sanctuary that invites the We Out Here audience to escape, unwind and explore together in August 2023. Capacity will remain the same as previous years, maintaining the friendly and intimate vibe. Full programme details to be announced early in the new year.
For more info visit www.weoutherefestival.com

Art Failure

Jimmy Smith

Christmas Cookin'
Verve (1964)

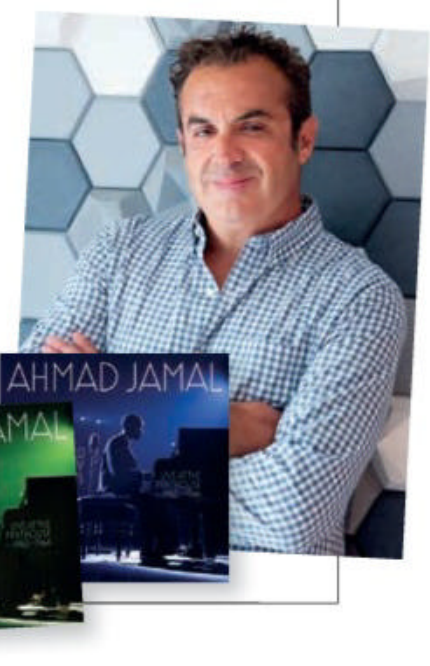
We've all been there: it's late on Christmas eve, and that last petrol station looms out of the dark, you can finally start your Christmas shopping! Well, it looks like Jimmy Smith is already on the case in this cockle-warming seasonal turkey of an album cover – although driving without holding the wheel and waving presents around could mean he's been at the Bailey's a little too early. As for the album it packs in some Yuletide selections with Jimmy joined by a big band arranged by either Billy Byers/Al Cohn plus a variety of trios, with Wes Montgomery popping up on 'Baby It's Cold Outside'. Smith delivers some jazzy Christmas gifts in the form of 'Jingle Bells', 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town' and two takes on 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'. But it looks like the label's art department may have knocked this cover up after one too many Sherrys at the Christmas party... **Mike Flynn**

The Jazz Detective uncovers Ahmad Jamal rarities

Music sleuth Zev Feldman (pictured) has announced his new imprint, Jazz Detective (a division of the newly created Deep Digs Music Group and named after his affectionate epithet), which launches on Record Store Day's Black Friday event on 25 November with two double-LP sets of previously unreleased live recordings by master pianist Ahmad Jamal. The albums will also be available as 2CD sets and downloads on 2 December (see review on page 47).

The two volumes of *Emerald City Nights: Live at the Penthouse*, capture spectacular 1963-64 and 1965-66 performances by the legendary pianist's trio at the Penthouse in Seattle. Produced by Feldman and supervised by Ahmad Jamal himself, the vinyl is issued on 180-gram discs transferred from the original tapes and mastered by the renowned Bernie Grundman. Packages include reflections by Jamal, interviews with the late Ramsey Lewis, Jon Batiste, Kenny Barron, and Hiromi, essays by Eugene Holley Jr, photos by Don Bronstein, Chuck Stewart and more. Commenting on the release Feldman (pictured below) said: "It's an enormous thrill for me to be working with Mr. Jamal, whom I've been listening to my entire life. He's a true original and beyond category. I couldn't be prouder of this new endeavour and these releases."

Though Jamal has recorded prolifically in a variety of settings – his most recent album *Ballades*, a studio session he released in 2019 at the age of 89, comprises solo and duo piano-bass recordings – he has always stated his preference for a live environment, as he explains in the *Emerald City Nights* notes: "There's no comparison between performing live and performing in a studio. It's all live, but remotely from the studio is a science and an art. If you can capture that, as some of us have, you always come up with spectacular things, in my opinion. Being in a studio has its constraints, has its difficulties. When you're performing remotely, away from the studio, it's a different thing altogether. All you need is a good engineer." **For more visit www.deepdigsmusic.com**



HEDVIG MOLLESTAD
IS ON RUNE GRAMMOFON

Hedvig Mollestad
Ekhidna
LP / CD / DL

Mollestad's Brutalist riposte to the Mahavishnu Orchestra's *Birds of Fire*.
—MOJO

The ensemble peak at a level of relentless intensity, and their inspired playing here helps take her music to a new level.
—THE WIRE

If you are searching for an album of pure jazz metal and shimmering compositions, look no further. This guitarist is touched by genius.
—JAZZ JOURNAL

Easily her most mind-blowing music to date.
—PROG

Hedvig Mollestad
Tempest Revisited
LP / CD / DL

An inspiring and beautiful suite of music.
—THE QUIETUS

Further proof that Mollestad is a truly sublime talent.
—PROG

Another excellent Mollestad record.
—THE WIRE

Mollestad is indeed an artist of the future: but with *Tempest Revisited*, she is of vigorous significance today.
—JAZZWISE

Hedvig Mollestad
Maternity Beat
2LP / CD / DL

NEW RELEASE
18TH NOVEMBER

Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Shoot!
LP / CD / DL

Sounds so good that it almost gives the band an unfair advantage.
—NEW YORK TIMES

Perfectly straddle the divide between jazz-schooled virtuosity and mondo heavy thrills.
—MOJO

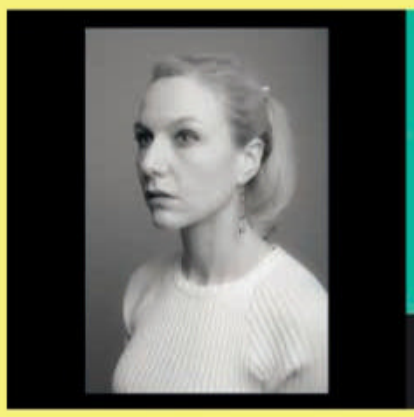
A killer jazz-rock fusion, recalling the scrappiest of Sonny Sharrock's comeback material infused with tones and riffs from postpunk and hard rock.
—CHICAGO READER

Hedvig Mollestad Trio
All of Them Witches
LP / CD / DL

Howling, hexed free rock from Nordic guitar heroine, stirred up in a cauldron of sub-metal froth and white-hot jazz rock.
—UNCUT

Intoxicating stuff all around.
—PROG

Another blast from this inimitable guitarist.
—THE ARTS DESK

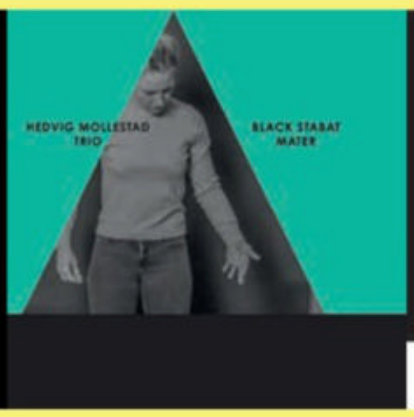


Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Enfant Terrible
LP / CD / DL

Carries all the sweaty swagger of classic Led Zeppelin.
—JAZZWISE

An irresistible mix of jam-band alacrity and methodical rigor.
—PROG

Loaded with attitude. Mollestad at her most recklessly virtuostic.
—ALL ABOUT JAZZ



Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Black Stabat Mater
LP / CD / DL

Their most complete showcase, balancing their visceral side with the beauty that's always hidden at the centre of the music.
—THE WIRE

The loose swagger of early Black Sabbath; the density and prowl of peak Led Zeppelin; the expeditionary urge of Jimi Hendrix; the incantatory fervor of John McLaughlin.
—JAZZTIMES

Challenging and stunning in equal measures.
—PROG

Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Evil in Oslo
2LP / DL

The trio's fluid, organic interaction, built over nearly a decade of playing together, is on full display here.
—THE WIRE

Has found a way to make headbanging fun.
—THE BLUE MOMENT

An impressive in-concert retrospective of the trio in no-holds-barred action.
—PROG

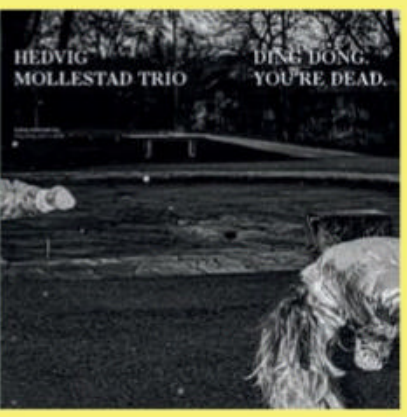
Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Smells Funny
LP / CD / DL

Avant-guitar adventure with an exuberant sense of occasion.
—ROLLING STONE

If you want to know what Hendrix might have done beyond 27, listen to this.
—CLASSIC ROCK

Remarkably tight, unapologetically loud, with enough harmonic content and improvisational daring.
—DOWNBEAT

Herewith, the hammer of the gods.
—MOJO



Hedvig Mollestad Trio
Ding Dong. You're Dead.
LP / CD / DL

An album that's as bone-crunchingly powerful as it is graciously poetic, this is surely their best yet.
—PROG

A trio to honour, an album to celebrate.
—JAZZWISE

A set of undefinable compositions that exist within their own universe of musicianship, true eclecticism and imagination.
—NEW YORK CITY JAZZ RECORD

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www.cargorecords.co.uk

Robert Mitchell TAKES 5

The pianist and composer selects the five albums he can't live without

1 *Jazz Advance* by Cecil Taylor

"I believe that Cecil first brought the beginnings of the super expansive conception into jazz and in music generally. The title 'Free Jazz' is only partially descriptive. This album shows the early signs of a restless creative drive. Someone who can hear they are on the verge of a breakthrough – a very exciting and unique atmosphere marks the whole album. Pivotal for me during student years!"

2 *An Evening with Herbie Hancock & Chick Corea: In Concert* by Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock

"One of my earliest jazz album purchases! Immense conversational and creative power on show here. Must have been a dream to be in the audience for these!! I did a little two piano playing as a student – hugely influenced by this. And with 'Button Up' – you really feel two very close friends talking though their instruments."

3 *Segments* by Geri Allen, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian

"Three legends serving the music to the fullest. All balancing a sense of in and out - with a feeling of infinite creative facility. Covers and arrangements sound as fresh as originals. It was/is a joy having this on vinyl. It has taken forever – but it's wonderful to see the music of Geri, Paul and Charlie start to become more studied, performed and celebrated."

4 *Rapsodia* by Gonzalo Rubalcaba

"This represents a firm forward step in the evolution of Cuban music. Period. An incredible synthesis of strong creative voice in both compositions and performance. Gonzalo deserves his place amongst the greats. I have had the honour of playing with two members of this seminal group: Julio Barretto and Felipe Cabrera. I listened to it for a year non-stop!"

5 *Moment Returns* by Triosk

"Triosk! This group should have had a profile at least as big as The Necks (also Australian). This - like all their great albums - shows a very powerful group voice. I love the sense of the seamless usage of acoustic and electronic with equal brilliance in both areas... and no clue as to where things can develop to, from moment to moment. They left a door open with many unanswered questions!"

Robert Mitchell True Think's new album *Hold The Light/The New Resistance* is out now on Bucks Records Limited - see review on page 40

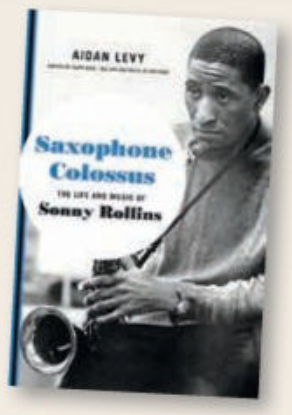
Blue Note releases Donald Byrd's Live from Montreux on LP

A long 'lost' live recording from legendary trumpeter Donald Byrd, *Live from Montreux* will be released for the first time on what would have been his 90th birthday (9 December 2022), via Blue Note Records. The recording comes from 1973 when the label headed to Montreux, Switzerland to showcase several of its stars at the world famous festival. A clutch of live albums all titled *Live: Cookin' with Blue Note* at Montreux followed from the likes of Bobby Hutcherson, Ronnie Foster, Bobbi Humphrey, and Marlena Shaw, but one of the performances by Donald Byrd remained unissued in the Blue Note vaults, until now.

That summer, Byrd was fresh off the release of his hit crossover fusion album *Black Byrd*, the first of his innovative and incredibly successful studio collaborations with producer Larry Mizell. But in a live setting the band had a rawer, harder edge, as this searing set attests. Byrd led a 10-piece band that included Larry Mizell on synthesisers, Fonce Mizell on trumpet/vocals, Allan Barnes on tenor saxophone/flute, Nathan Davis on soprano/tenor sax, Kevin Toney on electric piano, Barney Perry on electric guitar, Henry Franklin on electric bass, Keith Killgo on drums, and Ray Armando on congas and percussion. The set list includes 'Black Byrd' along with otherwise unrecorded Byrd originals such as 'The East,' 'Kwame,' and 'Poco-Mania,' as well as an excellent cover of Stevie Wonder's 'You've Got It Bad Girl'.

For full details visit www.bluenote.com

Long-awaited, first full biography of Sonny Rollins to be published



The long-awaited biography of one of jazz's true giants is to be published on 15 December by Da Capo Press. Based on more than 200 interviews by author Aidan Levy with Rollins himself, his family members, friends, collaborators, and consulations with Rollins' extensive archive, *Saxophone Colossus: The Life and Music of Sonny Rollins*, compiles Rollin's life, starting with his beginnings in Harlem and his relationships with fellow jazz icons, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, and many more. Aidan delves deep in Rollins' making of classic albums such as *Tenor Madness*, *Freedom Suite*, and the titular *Saxophone Colossus*. Apart from the music the book showcases Rollins' confrontation with the criminal justice system, overcoming drug addiction, and his use of jazz to advance the civil rights movement and promotion of environmental consciousness.

75 YEARS AGO – Woody Herman

A few months ago, we alluded to the 1942 recording strike by the US Musicians' Union (AFM), which lasted 13 months until some smaller labels accepted the union's terms, while it took over two years for majors like RCA and Columbia to sign up. However, in late 1947, the second strike was pending and, having been caught out once, the labels were busy stockpiling material as insurance. Dizzy Gillespie's big-band did two record sessions for RCA within the last 10 days of December, while Duke Ellington did three for Columbia.

Charlie Parker recorded for both of the companies that thought they had him under exclusive contract (Dial and Savoy) and, while all this activity produced some notable material, the person who arguably benefitted most artistically was Woody Herman. Initial sales of his mid-1940s band has been greatly boosted by a couple of Herman vocals (the movie theme 'Laura' and the Louis Jordan number 'Caldonia') but, like many bandleaders suffering from the post-war economy, in late 1946 he disbanded – only to decide in late 1947 that he needed a new big-band.

Its chosen personnel included such as trumpeter-arranger Shorty Rogers and a saxophone section with not only 20-year-old Stan Getz and Zoot Sims (and soon Al Cohn) on tenor but Serge Chaloff on baritone, while Herman's five December sessions produced several tracks for the ages. An original by his former pianist Ralph Burns featuring Getz, first released as 'Summer Sequence Pt.IV', later became known as 'Early Autumn' with a lyric by Johnny Mercer. And arranger Jimmy Giuffre spotlighted the "new sound" of a sax section with no alto but three tenors and a baritone, calling it 'Four Brothers'.

Brian Priestley

Ronnie Cuber: 25/12/1941 – 07/10/2022

Photo courtesy Alyn Shipton

Although Ronnie Cuber was a fine flautist, clarinettist and altoist, from 1959 his real specialism was the baritone sax. His lifelong affinity for the instrument – which he played in a bewildering array of settings – began with Marshall Brown's youth band at Newport in 1959. The group was short of a baritone, so Brown told the youngster the chair was his if he wanted it, and promptly bought Cuber an instrument. Thus started a career in which he became one of the true greats on this large, and in other hands, often unwieldy, instrument. When I first heard him with the horn section in Dr. John's touring band, I had no idea that he had already worked with Maynard Ferguson, Slide Hampton, and Woody Herman, plus a lifelong association with Lonnie Smith, and making albums such as the *George Benson Cookbook* with the great guitarist.

What really opened my eyes to his talent was when he appeared at Ronnie Scott's in 1999 with the Three Baritone Band, alongside Gary Smulyan and Charles Davis. His extrovert playing was a revelation, and when I talked to him afterwards for the BBC, he was as enthusiastic about his session work with the Average White Band, Steely Dan, Eric Clapton and Paul Simon (on whose *Graceland* album he appears) as he was about his jazz adventures with Mingus, Horace Silver, McCoy Tyner and his great friend Eddie Palmieri.

After that we stayed in touch, and he helped me on several radio documentaries, including a series on Gerry Mulligan in which he clearly explained Mulligan's innovations on the baritone. Our interviews involved visits to his tiny studio in Manhattan, first on East 49th St and later on the Upper West Side. This opened a window into his life away from the stage, with piles of music and discs, the books he read avidly, and the keyboard on which for many years he arranged for the Mingus Big Band.

I'll never forget the thrill of his first electrifying solos at Ronnie Scott's but his album that I most come back to is *Airplay*, (Steeplechase 1992). It 's a concise career summary: unusual time signatures, funk, hard bop, Latin jazz, and his quirky compositional style. I shall miss him greatly. **Alyn Shipton**

Brian Blain: 05/12/1929 – 09/10/2022

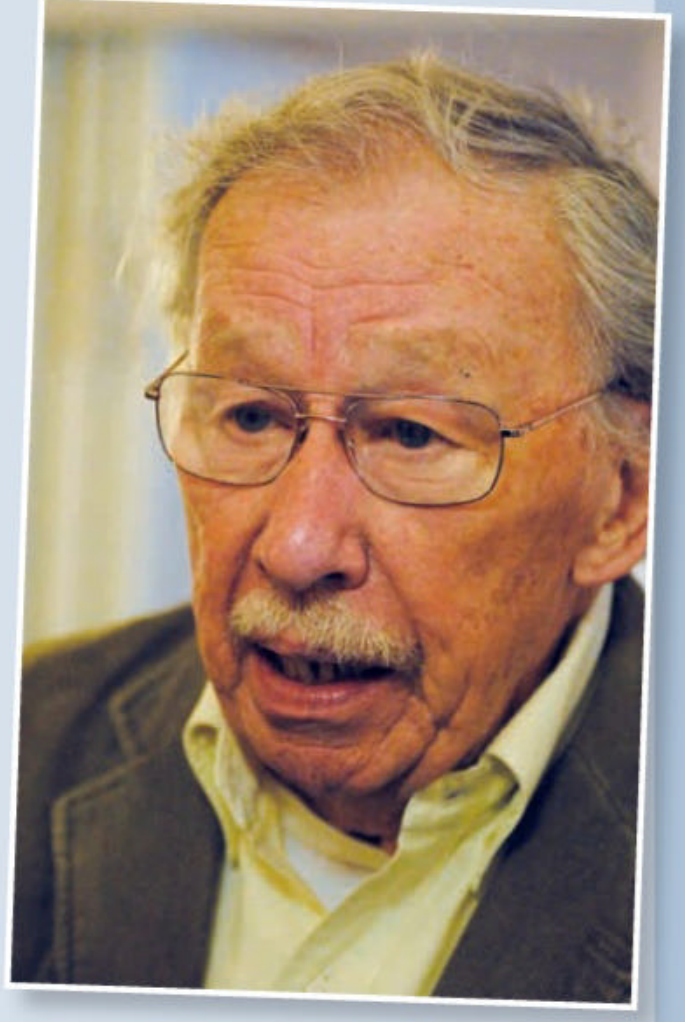


Photo by Peter Vacher

A tireless advocate for UK jazz and its musicians, the promoter, writer, and activist Brian Blain has died aged 92. Latterly prominent as the programmer of the yearly jazz series at Lauderdale House, the arts centre in Highgate, London, Brian had previously chaired the Jazz Centre Society, been a director of Jazz Services and a valued contributor to *Melody Maker* and *Jazz UK* magazine.

Born in Salford, he taught at a junior school in Lancashire before moving to London, re-training as a PE teacher and working in the East End. He then became an official of the Musicians Union staying in post for the rest of his career. He helped launch the union's 'Keep Music Live' programme, travelling the length of the UK organising big band and rock workshops, with Val Wilmer as the scheme's supporting photographer. Alert to newer and more adventurous forms of jazz and always open-minded, he saw to it that jazz and rock musicians joined the Union and pushed to ensure that women musicians and non-white players received their proper due. Brian also edited the Union's magazine for several decades, continuing to do so well into his retirement.

An *habitué* at Ronnie Scott's – they hosted a party for his retirement – he was known at every other London venue, however small, where jazz was happening. Left-leaning, an ardent Manchester City fan, loquacious – no conversation with Brian was ever short – and always questioning, Brian's love of jazz modernism dated from his schooldays when he first heard the youthful Tubby Hayes with Kenny Baker in a local dancehall.

Once in London he wrote reviews for *Melody Maker* as 'Christopher Bird', also contributing to other outlets, one highlight being his memoir of legendary drummer Phil Seamen, *I Remember Phil*, this widely reproduced.

More recently, he reviewed for *Jazz UK*, first under John Fordham's editorship, then for Roger Thomas, Fordham often driven to distraction as he sought to decipher Brian's rather ramshackle copy.

Although self-deprecating about his journalism, Brian didn't need to be. He knew what he was about, loved the music and its practitioners and thought deeply about its future. A regular at Swanage where his concert introductions were often anecdotal yet always illuminating, Brian was the most convivial of companions. It was just a joy to be in his company.

Away from jazz, Brian, and his wife Maureen (known as Mo) were keen fell-walkers and travellers, devoted to their family and grandchildren and it is to Mo, their children Sarah and Matthew, and the four grandchildren that we offer our heartfelt condolences.

As Richard Williams said, "He was the best friend jazz in London could have had." Amen to that. **Peter Vacher**

ACT Music: Thriving at 30

Stuart Nicholson *caught up with the founding and future faces behind the successful German jazz label*

With ACT Music celebrating its 30th anniversary with a big concert of ACT stars at the prestigious Berlin Philhamonie on 10 and 11 November, under the banner '30 Years in the Spirit of Jazz', its founder and CEO, the perspicacious Siggi Loch, took time out for *Jazzwise* for a moment of reflection.

"The 30 years with ACT have been the most important in my professional life," he says, "ACT is a passion, not a business model – simply to have had the freedom to release and support the kind of music I really care for and to contribute to the visibility of jazz from Europe and Germany has meant a lot to me."

Thirty years ago, Loch, whose whole career had been in the record industry, was the European Head of WEA (now Warner Music Europe). But in 1992, he decided to fulfil the dream of a lifetime. On an "If I don't do it now, I'll never do it" basis, he left WEA and formed ACT Jazz + World-Jazz in Hamburg. His first album for the fledgling label, *JAZZPAÑA - The Mendoza-Mardin Project*, a flamenco-influenced recording arranged by Arif Mardin and – mostly – Vince Mendoza, got the label off to a good start with two Grammy nominations.

It wasn't long before awards and honours were coming his way, including ECHO Jazz Record Label of the Year awards, an Order of Merit by from The Federal Republic of Germany, a knighthood from the King of Sweden as 1st Class Knight of the Swedish North Star Order and international recognition as one of the most experienced music managers and record producers in the record industry.

At 82 years of age, he is still actively involved in the business, but talk is now of succession planning. Andreas Brandis (pictured left, with Loch on the right), whose curriculum vitae includes management level experience with Deutsche Gramophone and as a label manager for ECM, has co-led ACT alongside Siggi for the last seven years, this year assuming a full partnership role with Loch.

"I am happy to say, that in Andreas, I have found a person who has a very clear idea of how an independent music company has to be set up today," continues Loch. "Under his lead, ACT will for sure remain a producing label, both in the digital and physical world, but is also very successfully pursuing other fields such as booking, touring, management and communication, ensuring we can offer anything artists could need in order to be successful."

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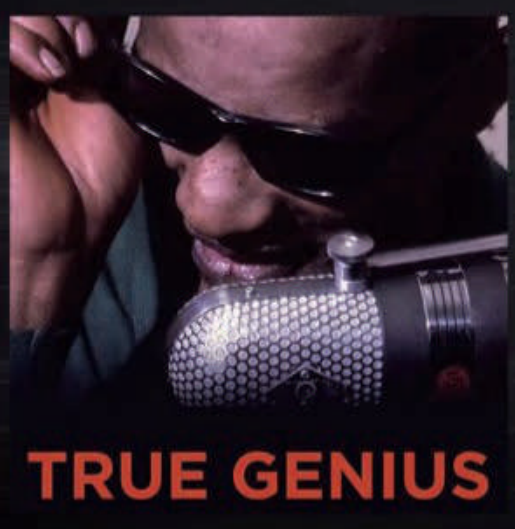

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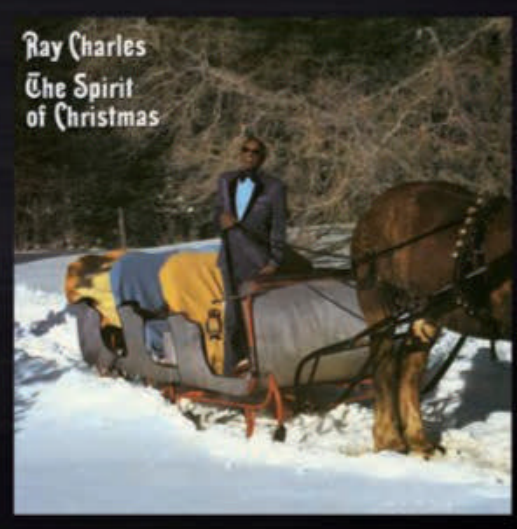
A MESSAGE FROM THE PEOPLE



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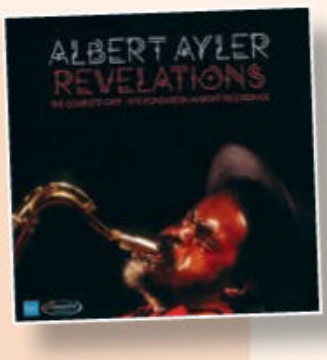
Albums of the Year: Critics Poll 2022

If 2022 has been a year of global and domestic political turmoil, then jazz has had a consistently compelling 12 months, as is evident by the cracking New and Reissues/Archival Critics' Poll results below. This year is also unique, as pre-eminent US vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant becomes the first female artist to top our New Releases Albums of the Year twice, with *Ghost Song* matching 2017's *Dreams and Daggers* to be voted to No.1. Charles Lloyd's second place reflects his astonishing form aged 84, and alto sax ace Immanuel Wilkins' scorching sophomore LP edged into third spot, just ahead of some truly excellent albums. It was a golden year for reissues too, with stunning archival sets from Albert Ayler, Charles Mingus and Max Roach atop a tower of powerful releases. As usual, all writers submit their top 10 choices in both categories, with 10 marks for number one, down to one for number 10. **Mike Flynn and Jon Newey**

JAZZWISE 2022 TOP 20 ALBUMS – NEW RELEASES

1 Cécile McLorin Salvant Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
2 Charles Lloyd Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
3 Immanuel Wilkins The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
4 Mary Halvorson Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
5 Fergus McCreadie Forest Floor *Edition*
6 Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade LongGone *Nonesuch*
7 Avishai Cohen Trio Shifting Sands *Naïve*
8 Nduduzo Makhathini In The Spirit of Ntu *Blue Note*
9 Trish Clowes A View With A Room *Greenleaf Music*
10 Terri Lyne Carrington New Standards Vol.1 *Candid*
11 Julia Hülsmann Quartet The Next Door *ECM*
12 Tigran Hamasyan StandArt *Nonesuch*
13 Julian Lage View With A Room *Blue Note*
14 Oded Tzur Isabela *ECM*
15 Gareth Williams Short Stories *Miles Music*
16 Arun Ghosh Seclused In Light *Camoci*
17 Ches Smith Interpret It Well *Pyroclastic Records*
18 Charles Lloyd Trios: Sacred Thread *Blue Note*
19 Brad Mehldau Jacob's Ladder *Nonesuch*
20 Alina Bzhezhinska Reflections *BBE*

JAZZWISE 2022 TOP 20 ALBUMS – REISSUES & ARCHIVE



1 Albert Ayler Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
2 Charles Mingus The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
3 Max Roach We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
4 Miles Davis That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol.7 *Columbia/Legacy*
5 Abbey Lincoln Straight Ahead *Candid*
6 Joe Harriott Quintet feat Phil Seamen and Pat Smythe Swings High *Cadillac*
7 McCoy Tyner/Freddie Hubbard Quartet Live At Fabrik*NDR Kultur*
8 John Coltrane My Favorite Things 60th Deluxe Edition *Rhino/Atlantic*
9 Charles Mingus Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus *Candid*
10 Soft Machine Facelift France and Holland *Cuneiform*
11 Various Artists John Sinclair Presents Detroit Artists Workshop: Community, Jazz and Art In The Motor City 1965-1981 *Strut*
12 Cecil Taylor The Complete Legendary Live Return Concert *Oblivion*
13 Charles Mingus A Modern Jazz Symposium of Music and Poetry *New Land*
14 Nucleus Live At The BBC *Repertoire*
15 Max Roach Members, Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*
16 Buddy Rich Mr Drums: The Buddy Rich Collection 1946-1953 *Acrobat*
17 John Coltrane Blue Trane *Blue Note Tone Poet*
18 Various Artists Classic Black & White Jazz Sessions *Mosaic*
19 Dave Brubeck Trio Live In Vienna 1967 *Brubeck Editions*
20 Don Ellis The Hindustani Jazz Sextet Live at UCLA *Sleepy Night*

JANE CORNWELL

NEW RELEASES

1 Cécile McLorin Salvant Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
2 The Brother Moves On $he Who Feeds You Owns You *Native Rebel*
3 Tigran Hamasyan StandArt *Nonesuch*
4 Alina Bzhezhinska Reflections *BBE*
5 Eliane Correa y La Evolución Signo de Fuego *Somos Más*
6 Kokoroko Could We Be More *Brownswood*
7 Terri Lyne Carrington New Standards Vol.1 *Candid*
8 Joanna Duda Trio Fumitsuke *Echo Production*
9 Moor Mother Jazz Codes *Anti-*
10 Sarathy Korwar Kalak *Leaf Label*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 Julie Driscoll 1969 *Esoteric/Cherry Red*
2 Max Roach We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
3 Pharoah Sanders Shukuru *Theresa/Pure Pleasure*
4 Di Meola/McLaughlin/De Lucia Saturday Night In San Francisco *Ear Music/Impex*
5 Centipede Septober Energy *Esoteric/Cherry Red*
6 Albert Ayler Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
7 Ray Charles The Singles Collection *Acrobat*
8 John Coltrane My Favorite Things 60th Deluxe Edition *Rhino/Atlantic*
9 Robert Fripp Exposures *DGM*
10 Chick Corea The Montreux Years 1981-2010 *BMG*

MIKE FLYNN

NEW RELEASES

1 Immanuel Wilkins The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
2 Cécile McLorin Salvant Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
3 Mary Halvorson Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
4 Tigran Hamasyan StandArt *Nonesuch*
5 Charles Lloyd Trios: Sacred Thread *Blue Note*
6 Alina Bzhezhinska Reflections *BBE*
7 Trish Clowes View with a Room *Greenleaf*
8 Makaya McCraven In These Times *XL Recordings/Nonesuch*
9 Mark Lockheart Dreamers *Edition*
10 Fergus McCreadie Forest Floor *Edition*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 Charles Mingus The Lost Album from Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
2 Albert Ayler Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
3 McCoyTyner/Freddie Hubbard Quartet Live at Fabrik *NDR Kultur*
4 Brian Auger & The Trinity Far Horizons *Soul Bank Music*
5 Nucleus Live at the BBC *Repertoire*
6 John Coltrane My Favorite Things 60th Deluxe Edition *Rhino/Atlantic*
7 Norah Jones Come Away With Me: 20th Anniversary Super Deluxe Edition *Blue Note*
8 Soft Machine Facelift France and Holland *Cuneiform*
9 Keith Tippett, Julie Tippetts, Philip Gibbs, Paul Dunmall Mahogany Rain *577 Records*
10 Hermeto Pascoal E Grupo Planetario Da Gavea *Far Out*

JOHN FORDHAM

NEW RELEASES

1 Mark Turner Return From The Stars *ECM*
2 Ches Smith Interpret It Well *Pyroclastic*
3 Oded Tzur Isabela *ECM*
4 Charles Lloyd Trios: Sacred Thread *Blue Note*
5 Mary Halvorson Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
6 Avishai Cohen Naked Truth *ECM*
7 Satoko Fujii Mosaic/Futari *Libra Records*
8 Cécile McLorin Salvant Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
9 Bill Frisell Four *Blue Note*
10 Tim Berne/Gregg Belisle-Chi Mars *Intakt*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 Cecil Taylor Complete Legendary Live Return Concert *Oblivion*
2 Albert Ayler Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/lemental*
3 Charles Mingus The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
4 Abbey Lincoln Straight Ahead *Candid*
5 Joe Harriott Quintet feat Phil Seamen and Pat Smythe Swings High *Cadillac*
6 Bill Evans Inner Spirit: The 1979 Concert At The Teatro General San Martín *Resonance*
7 Ornette Coleman Genesis of Genius *Craft Recordings*
8 Lennie Tristano Personal Recordings 1946-1970 *Mosaic*
9 Charles Tolliver Music Inc Live in Tokyo *Strata East/Pure Pleasure*
10 Miles Davis That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol 7 *Columbia/Legacy*

BRIAN GLASSER

NEW RELEASES

1 Charles Lloyd Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
2 Julia Hülsmann Quartet The Next Door *ECM*
3 Julian Lage View With A Room *Blue Note*
4 Mark Giuliana the sound of listening *Edition*
5 Mary Halvorson Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
6 Elan Mehler There Is A Dance *Newvelle*
7 Mario Laginha Trio Jangada *Edition*
8 Avishai Cohen Naked Truth *ECM*
9 Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade Long Gone *Nonesuch*
10 Doudou Gouirand Voices For Peace *Hative*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 Jim Hall It's Nice To Be With You *MPS*
2 Noah Preminger Some Other Time *Newvelle*
3 Hadda Brooks Out Of The Blue 1945-53 *Acrobat*
4 Howard McGhee Dusty Blue *Newland*
5 Blue Notes Blue Notes In Concert *Ogun*
6 Charles Mingus Mingus Three *Rhino*
7 Curtis Fuller Blues-ette *Essential*
8 Azymuth Telecommunication *Craft Recordings*
9 Willie 'The Lion' Smith 100 Classic Recordings 1925-53 *Acrobat*
10 Blue Mitchell Blue Mitchell *New Land*

Pictured right: Immanuel Wilkins

SELWYN HARRIS

NEW RELEASES

1 **Immanuel Wilkins** The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
2 **Avishai Cohen Trio** Shifting Sands *Naïve*
3 **Brad Mehldau** Jacob's Ladder *Nonesuch*
4 **Fergus McCreadie** Forest Floor *Edition*
5 **Julian Lage** View With a Room *Blue Note*
6 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
7 **Punkt. Vrt.Plastik** Zurich Concert *Intakt*
8 **Mark Lockheart** Dreamers *Edition*
9 **Marius Neset** Happy *ACT*
10 **Will Bernard** Pond Life *Dreck to Dreck*

TOP 10 REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album from Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
2 **Miles Davis** That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol 7 *Columbia/Legacy*
3 **John Coltrane** Blue Train *Blue Note Tone Poet*
4 **Abbey Lincoln** Straight Ahead *Candid*
5 **Dexter Gordon** Soul Sister *SteepleChase*
6 **Max Roach** We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
7 **Charles Mingus** Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus *Candid*
8 **Barney Wilen** Zodiac *We Are Busy Bodies*
9 **Max Roach** Members, Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*
10 **Lennie Tristano** Personal Recordings 1946-1970 *Mosaic*

NICK HASTED

NEW RELEASES

1 **Arun Ghosh** Seclused In Light *Camoci*
2 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Ocean *Blue Note*
3 **Sarathy Korwar** Kalak *Leaf Label*
4 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
5 **Shake Stew** Heat *Traumton*
6 **Makaya McCraven** In These Times *XL Recordings*
7 **The Comet Is Coming** Hyper-Dimensional Expansion Beam *Verve*
8 **Arild Andersen Group** Affirmation *ECM*
9 **Cécile McLorin Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
10 **Binker Golding** Dream Like A Dogwood Wild Boy *Gearbox*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Duke Ellington and John Coltrane** Duke Ellington & John Coltrane *Analogue Productions/Impulse!*
2 **John Coltrane** My Favourite Things 60th Anniversary Deluxe *Rhino/Atlantic*
3 **Various Artists** John Sinclair Presents Detroit Artists Workshop: Community, Jazz & Art In The Motor City 1965-1981 *Strut*
4 **Elvin Jones** Revival: Live at Pookies Pub *Blue Note*
5 **Albert Ayler** Revelation: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/lemental*
6 **Duke Ellington** Duke Ellington Meets Coleman Hawkins *Analogue Productions/Impulse!*
7 **Max Roach** Members, Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*
8 **Max Roach** We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
9 **Miles Davis** That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol 7 *Columbia/Legacy*
10 **Norah Jones** Come Away With Me: 20th Anniversary Super Deluxe Edition *Blue Note*

MIKE HOBART

NEW RELEASES

1 **Immanuel Wilkins** The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
2 **Matthew Shipp** World Construct *ESP*
3 **JD Allen** Americana Vol.2 *Savant*
4 **Wadada Leo Smith** Emerald Duets *TUM*
5 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
6 **Cécile McLorin Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
7 **Ches Smith** Interpret It Well *Pyroclastic*
8 **Binker & Moses** Feeding the Machine *Gearbox*
9 **Joel Ross** The Parable of the Poet *Blue Note*
10 **Angelica Sanchez** Sparkle Beings *Sunnyside*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
2 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album from Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
3 **Joe Harriott Quintet feat Phil Seamen and Pat Smythe** Swings High *Cadillac*
4 **Eddie Harris** Live at Fabrik, Hamburg 1988 *Jazzline*
5 **John Coltrane** Blue Train *Blue Note Tone Poet*
6 **Chick Corea** The Montreux Years 1981-2010 *BMG*
7 **Cecil Taylor** The Complete Legendary Live Return Concert *Oblivion*
8 **Freddie Hubbard** Complete Blue Note & Impulse! '60s Studio Sessions *Mosaic*
9 **Brian Auger and the Trinity** Far Horizons *Soul Bank*
10 **Blue Notes** Blue Notes for Mongezi *OGUN*

KEVIN LE GENDRE

NEW RELEASES

1 **Immanuel Wilkins** The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
2 **Various Artists** Black Lives From Generation To Generation *Jammin' Colours*
3 **David Virelles** Nuna *Pi Recordings*
4 **Nduduzo Makhathini** In The Spirit of Ntu *Blue Note*
5 **Cécile McLorin Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
6 **Alexander Hawkins Mirror Canon** Break A Vase *Intakt*
7 **Wadada Leo Smith** Emerald Duets *TUM*
8 **Fergus McCreadie** Forest Floor *Edition*
9 **Mary Halvorson** Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
10 **Jakob Bro & Joe Lovano** Once Around The Room *ECM*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
2 **Abbey Lincoln** Straight Ahead *Candid*
3 **Andy Bey** Experience And Judgment *Real Gone/Atlantic*
4 **Charles Mingus** Trio *Jubilee*
5 **Monette Sudler** In My Own Way *SteepleChase*
6 **Charles Mingus** A Modern Jazz Symposium Of Music And Poetry *New Land*
7 **Hermeto Pascoal** Hermeto *Far Out*
8 **Cecil Taylor** The Complete Legendary Live Return Concert *Oblivion*
9 **Pharoah Sanders** Shukuru *Theresa/Pure Pleasure*
10 **Max Roach** Members, Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*

JON NEWEY

NEW RELEASES

1 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
2 **Oded Tzur** Isabela *ECM*
3 **Cécile McLoren Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
4 **Immanuel Wilkins** The 7th Hand *Blue Note*
5 **Arun Ghosh** Seclused in Light *Camoci*
6 **Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade** LongGone *Nonesuch*
7 **Gareth Williams** Short Stories *Miles Music*
8 **Chip Wickham** Cloud 10 *Gondwana*
9 **Fergus McCreadie** Forest Floor *Edition*
10 **Joel Ross** The Parable of The Poet *Blue Note*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Joe Harriott Quintet feat Phil Seamen and Pat Smythe** Swings High *Cadillac*
2 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
3 **Soft Machine** Facelift France and Holland *Cuneiform*
4 **Esbjörn Svensson** Home. S. *ACT*
5 **Charles Mingus** A Modern Jazz Symposium of Music and Poetry *New Land*
6 **Miles Davis** That's What happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol. 7 *Columbia/Legacy*
7 **Don Ellis** The Hindustani Jazz Sextet Live at UCLA *Sleepy Night*
8 **Max Roach** Members Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*
9 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album from Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
10 **Various Artists** John Sinclair Presents Detroit Artists Workshop. Community, Jazz and Art in The Motor City 1965-1981 *Strut*

STUART NICHOLSON

NEW RELEASES

1 **Julia Hülsmann Quartet** The Next Door *ECM*
2 **Zela Margossian Quintet** The Road *Ropeadope*
3 **Emile Parisien** Louise *ACT*
4 **Espen Berg** The Trondheim Concert *NXN*
5 **Espen Eriksen Trio with Andy Sheppard** In the Mountains *Rune Grammofon*
6 **Scottish National Jazz Orchestra** Where Rivers Meet *Spartacus*
7 **The Bad Plus** the bad plus *Edition*
8 **Julian Lage** View with A Room *Blue Note*
9 **Gareth Williams** Short Stories *Miles Music*
10 **Vazesh** The Sacred Key *Earshift Music*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **McCoy Tyner/Freddie Hubbard Quintet** Live at Fabrik *NDR Kultur*
2 **Joe Harriot Quintet** Rake's Progress at the BBC *Rhythm & Blues Records*
3 **Don Ellis** The Hindustani Jazz Sextet Live at UCLA *Sleepy Night*
4 **Bill le Sage** Directions in Jazz *Rhythm & Blues Records*
5 **John Taylor Sextet** Fragment *Jazz In Britain*
6 **Ahmad Jamal** Emerald City Nights: Live at the Penthouse *Jazz Detective*
7 **Henry Lowther's Quarternity** Never Never Land *Jazz in Britain*
8 **Michel Petrucciani** Solo In Denmark *Storyville*
9 **Stan Tracey** The 1959 Sessions *Restated Records*
10 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

NEW RELEASES

1 **Miguel Zenón** Música de las Américas *Miel Music*
2 **Enrico Rava/Fred Hersch** The Song Is You *ECM*
3 **Chris Laurence** Ken Wheeler: Some Gnu Ones *Jazz In Britain*
4 **Fergus McCreadie** Forest Floor *Edition*
5 **Terri Lyne Carrington** New Standards Vol.1 *Candid*
6 **Melissa Aldana** 12 Stars *Blue Note*
7 **Cécile McLorin Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
8 **Samara Joy** Linger Awhile *Verve*
9 **Bill Frisell** Four *Blue Note*
10 **Art Themen/Dave Barry Quartet** Hanky Panky *Trio*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Charles Mingus** Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus *Candid*
2 **Max Roach** We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
3 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
4 **Bill Evans** The Legendary Bill Evans Trio *Cherry Red*
5 **Charles Mingus** A Modern Jazz Symposium of Music And Poetry *New Land*
6 **Freddie Hubbard** Complete Blue Note & Impulse! '60s Studio Sessions *Mosaic*
7 **Frank Kimbrough** Frank Kimborough 2003-2006 *Palmetto*
8 **Lennie Tristano** Personal Recordings 1946-1970 *Mosaic*
9 **Hot Lips Page** Feeling High And Happy *Retrospective*
10 **Various Artists** Classic Black & White Jazz Sessions *Mosaic*

PETER QUINN

NEW RELEASES

1 **Cécile McLorin Salvant** Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
2 **Lizz Wright** Holding Space *Blues & Greens*
3 **Samara Joy** Linger Awhile *Verve*
4 **Emma Smith** Meshuga Baby *Windsor Castle Records*
5 **Fergus McCreadie** Forest Floor *Edition*
6 **Michael Leonhart Orchestra** The Normyn Suites *Sunnyside*
7 **Tord Gustavsen Trio** Opening *ECM*
8 **Tigran Hamasyan** StandArt *Nonesuch*
9 **Benny Maupin & Adam** Rudolph Symphonic Tone Poem For Brother Yusef *Strut*
10 **Ester Wiesnerová** Blue Journal *Self-release*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Ella Fitzgerald** The Singles *New Continent*
2 **John Coltrane** My Favorite Things 60th Deluxe Edition *Rhino/Atlantic*
3 **Charles Mingus** Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus *Candid*
4 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
5 **Frank Kimbrough** Frank Kimbrough 2003-2006 *Palmetto*
6 **Hermeto Pascoal** Hermeto *Far Out*
7 **Mark Murphy** Four Classic Albums *Avid Jazz*
8 **Dinah Washington & Quincy Jones** The Complete Sessions *Essential Jazz Classics*
9 **Jimmy Scott/Oscar Brown Jr** Five Classic Albums *Avid Jazz*
10 **Dexter Gordon** Soul Sister *SteepleChase*

Hitting all the right notes - Cécile McLorin Salvant

ROBERT SHORE

NEW RELEASES

1 **Michael Wollny Trio** Ghosts *ACT*
2 **Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade** Long Gone *Nonesuch*
3 **Nduduzo Makhathini** In The Spirit Of Ntu *Blue Note*
4 **Brigitte Beraha** Blink *Let Me Out Records*
5 **Avishai Cohen Trio** Shifting Sands *Naïve*
6 **Trish Clowes** A Room With A View *Greenleaf Music*
7 **Brad Mehldau** Jacob's Ladder *Nonesuch*
8 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
9 **Randal Despommier ft. Ben Monder** A Midsummer Odyssey *Sunnyside*
10 **Marta Sanchez** SAAM (Spanish American Art Museum) *Whirlwind Recordings*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Miles Davis** That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol. 7 *Columbia/Legacy*
2 **McCoy Tyner/Freddie Hubbard Quartet** Live At Fabrik *NDR Kultur*
3 **Buddy Rich** Mr Drums: The Buddy Rich Collection 1946-1955 *Acrobat*
4 **David Sylvian** Blemish *Samadhisound*
5 **Max Roach** Members, Don't Git Weary *Real Gone/Atlantic*
6 **Steve Tibbetts** Hellbound Train: An Anthology *ECM*
7 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
8 **Dave Brubeck Trio** Live From Vienna 1967 *Brubeck Editions*
9 **Sammy Davis Jr** The Singles Collection 1949–62 *Acrobat*
10 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*

PETER VACHER

NEW RELEASES

1 **Gareth Williams** Short Stories *Miles Music*
2 **Opus 5** Swing on This *CrissCross Jazz*
3 **Ricky Ford** The Wailing Sounds of Ricky Ford: Paul's Scene *Whaling City Sound*
4 **Dameronia's Legacy All Stars** Live at Audi Forum Ingolstadt *Ubuntu*
5 **Chris Byars** Rhythm and Blues of the 20s *SteepleChase*
6 **Art Themen/Dave Barry Quartet** Hanky Panky *Trio*
7 **Tom Harrell** Oak Tree *HighNote*
8 **Chris Hodgkins** A Salute to Humphrey Lyttelton *Bell*
9 **Scott Hamilton** Classics *Stunt*
10 **Harvey/O'Higgins Project** That's The Way to Live *Ubuntu*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Various Artists** Classic Black & White Jazz Sessions *Mosaic*
2 **Willie 'The Lion' Smith** 100 Classic Recordings 1925-53 *Acrobat*
3 **Brew Moore** Special Brew *SteepleChase*
4 **Frankie Newton** The Connoisseur's Frankie Newton 1937-1939 *Retrospective*
5 **Buddy Rich** Mr Drums: The Buddy Ruch Collection 1946-1953 *Acrobat*
6 **Buddy DeFranco** The Bebop Years, 1949-1956 *Acrobat*
7 **Tubby Hayes** Hip! The Untold Story of Tubby Hayes 1965 *Rhythm and Blues Records*
8 **Wardell Gray** Four Classic Albums Plus *Avid Jazz*
9 **Directions in Jazz Unit** New Directions in Jazz *Rhythm & Blues Records*
10 **Pee Wee Russell/Coleman Hawkins** Jazz Reunion *Candid*

ANDY ROBSON

NEW RELEASES

1 **Mary Halvorson** Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
2 **Hedvig Mollestad & Trondheim Jazz Orchestra** Maternity Beat Rune *Grammofon*
3 **Charles Lloyd** Trios: Chapel *Blue Note*
4 **Thumbscrew** Multicoloured Midnight *Cuneiform*
5 **Mark Lockheart** Dreamers *Edition*
6 **Trish Clowes** A View with a Room *Greenleaf Music*
7 **Brigitte Beraha** Blink *Let Me Out Records*
8 **Laura Jurd** The Big Friendly Album *Big Friendly Records*
9 **O'Higgins & Luft** Pluto *Ubuntu*
10 **Westbrook & Company** Paintbox Jane *Westbrook Records*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Max Roach** We Insist! Freedom Now Suite *Candid*
2 **Abbey Lincoln** Straight Ahead *Candid*
3 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
4 **Joe Harriott Quintet ft Phil Seamen and Pat Smythe** Swings High *Cadillac*
5 **Blue Notes** Blue Notes for Mongezi *Cadillac Records*
6 **Allan Holdsworth** Jarasum International Jazz Festival 2014 *Manifesto*
7 **Robert Fripp** Exposures *DGM*
8 **Soft Machine** Facelift France & Holland *Cuneiform*
9 **Centipede** Septober Energy *Esoteric/Cherry Red*
10 **Brian Augur and the Trinity** Far Horizons *Soul Bank*

ALYN SHIPTON

NEW RELEASES

1 **Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade** LongGone *Nonesuch*
2 **Terri Lyne Carrington** New Standards Vol. 1 *Candid*
3 **Bobby Watson** Back Home in Kansas City *Smoke Sessions Records*
4 **Lynne Arriale** The Lights Are Always On *Challenge*
5 **Trish Clowes** A View with a Room *Greenleaf*
6 **Joey Alexander** Origin Mack *Avenue*
7 **Anat Cohen and Marcello Gonçalves** Reconvexo *ANZIC*
8 **Cyrus Chestnut** My Father's Hands *Hightone*
9 **Enrico Rava and Fred Hersch** The Song Is You *ECM*
10 **Steve Davis** Bluesthetic *Smoke Sessions Records*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Nucleus** Live at the BBC *Repertoire*
2 **Chris Barber** Just Once More For All Time *Lake*
3 **Miles Davis** That's What Happened 1982-1985: The Bootleg Series Vol 7 *Columbia/Legacy*
4 **Anita O'Day** Cool Heat: Anita O'Day Sings Jimmy Giuffre Arrangements *Essential Jazz Classics*
5 **Blossom Dearie** The Early Years Collection 1948-60 *Acrobat*
6 **Ray Charles** The Singles Collection 1949-62 *Acrobat*
7 **Buddy DeFranco** The Bebop Years 1949-1956 *Acrobat*
8 **Clark Terry** Color Changes *Candid*
9 **Pepper Adams with the Tommy Banks Trio** Live at Room at the Top *Reel to Real*
10 **Mark Murphy** Four Classic Albums *Avid*

DANIEL SPICER

NEW RELEASES

1 **Sun Ra Arkestra** Living Sky *Omni Sound*
2 **Henry Franklin/Adrian Younge/Ali Shaheed Muhammad** JID014 *Jazz Is Dead*
3 **Martin Küchen** Utopia *Thanatosis Produktion*
4 **Punkt. Vrt. Plastik** Zurich Concert *Intakt*
5 **Dave Gisler Trio with Jaimie Branch and David Murray** See You Out There *Intakt*
6 **Luke Stewart Silt Trio** The Bottom *Cuneiform*
7 **Jeff Parker/Eric Revis/Nasheet Waits** Eastside Romp *Rogueart*
8 **James Brandon Lewis Quartet** Molecular Systematic Music Live *Intakt*
9 **William Parker** Universal Tonality *Centering*
10 **Hedvig Mollestad & Trondheim Jazz Orchestra** Maternity Beat Rune *Grammofon*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Foundation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
2 **Various Artists** Detroit Artists Workshop: Community, Jazz and Art in the Motor City 1965-1981 *Strut*
3 **Freddie Hubbard** Music Is Here: Live at Studio 104 Maison de la Radio ORTF, Paris 1973 *We Want Sounds*
4 **Elton Dean Quartet** On Italian Roads: Live in Milan 1979 *British Progressive Jazz*
5 **Frank Zappa** Zappa/Erie *Zappa Records*
6 **Soft Machine** Facelift France and Holland *Cuneiform*
7 **The Keith Tippett Group** How Long This Time? Live 1970 *British Progressive Jazz*
8 **John Taylor Sextet** Eye To Eye: Live 1971 *British Progressive Jazz*
9 **Masahiko Togashi / Don Cherry / Charlie Haden** Song of Soil *We Want Sounds*
10 **Derek Bailey** Domestic Jungle *Scatter*

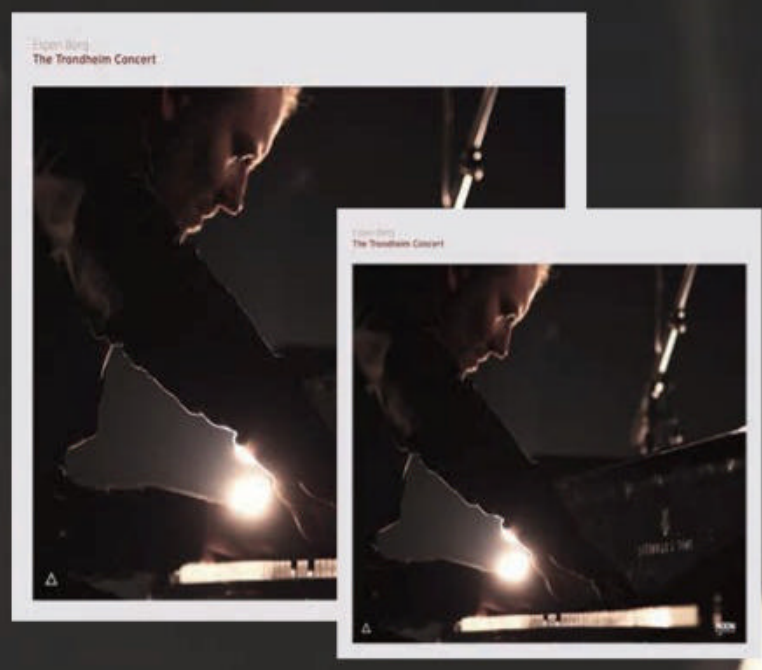
KEVIN WHITLOCK

NEW RELEASES

1 **Somi** Zenzile: The Reimagination of Miriam Makeba *Salon Africana*
2 **Avishai Cohen** Shifting Sands *Naïve*
3 **Mary Halvorson** Amaryllis/Belladonna *Nonesuch*
4 **Oren Ambarchi/Johan Berthling/Andreas Werliin** Ghosted *Drag City*
5 **Anteloper** Pink Dolphins *International Anthem*
6 **Nduduzo Makhathini** In The Spirit Of Ntu *Blue Note*
7 **Alexander Hawkins Mirror Canon** Break A Vase *Intakt*
8 **Tomas Fujiwara's Triple Double** March *Firehouse 12*
9 **Joy Ellis** Peaceful Place *Self-release*
10 **Jeff Denson/Brian Blade/Romain Pilon** Finding Light *Ridgeway Records*

REISSUES/ARCHIVE

1 **Duke Ellington** Live At The Berlin Jazz Festival 1969-1973 *The Lost Recordings*
2 **Dave Brubeck Trio** Live In Vienna 1967 *Brubeck Editions*
3 **Albert Ayler** Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings *INA/Elemental*
4 **Charles Mingus** The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's *Resonance*
5 **Charles Tolliver** Music Inc Live in Tokyo *Pure Pleasure/Strata East*
6 **Bill Evans** Morning Glory *Resonance*
7 **David Sylvian** Blemish *Samadhisound*
8 **Monnette Sudler** In My Own Way *SteepleChase*
9 **Various Artists** Classic Black & White Jazz Sessions *Mosaic*
10 **Johnny Hammond** Gears *Jazz Dispensary/Milestone*



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// Stuart Nicholson, Jazzwise

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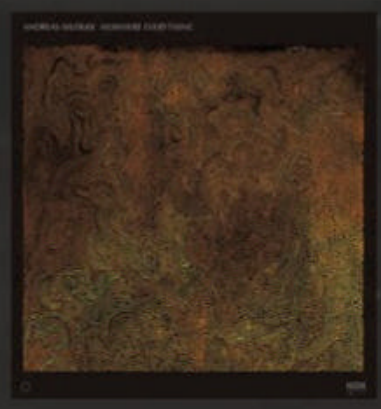

ANDREAS IHLEBÆK

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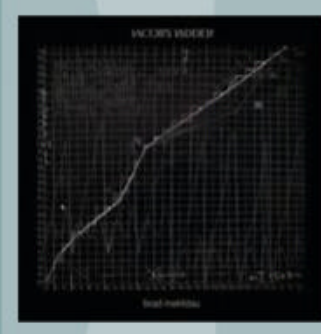
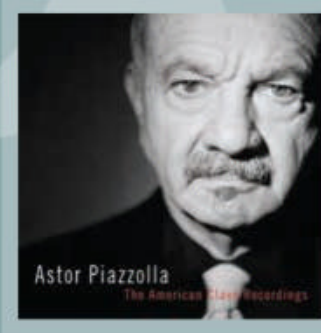


BRAD MEHLDAU
Jacob's Ladder

'This new release might be Mehldau's most far-out project to date. Yet it feels like a natural evolution as well as an amalgamation of two of his most exceptional recordings from the past decade: duo Mehliana's synth-prog driven 2014 release *Taming the Dragon* and 2019's Grammy award-winning *Finding Gabriel*.'

– Jazzwise, Editor's Choice ★★★★



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– Songlines ★★★★★

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LongGone

'The years fall away as the timeless music the great Joshua Redman Quartet make together falls back into place.'

– BBC Music Magazine, Jazz Choice ★★★★★

CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT
Ghost Song

'Music of sensitivity and intelligence, which underlines Salvant's growth as an artist of stature whose stylistic choices are as daring as they are mature.'

– Jazzwise, Editor's Choice ★★★★

NONESUCH.COM

Pride of the Balkans

Main picture: Jazzmeia Horn at the A To jazZ Festival; Inset: Maceo Parket at this year's Bankso Jazz Fest (photos: Sophia From Sofia)

In this special feature we visit Bulgaria, not only a country that's home to one of Europe's oldest jazz scenes, but also a thriving, eclectic and forward-looking current one

First, a little history: It may surprise you, but the history of jazz in Bulgaria goes right back to the second decade of the last century – back to the immediate aftermath of the Great War, in fact. According to the agreements signed at the end of the conflict (in which Bulgaria had sided with the defeated Germany), French and Italian occupation forces commanded by General Chrétien moved into the capital Sofia. They were accompanied by quite a few military bands, which started appearing in the shows of already existing and newly opened cabarets and nightclubs. "The army must have fun," the French commander in chief ordered. This order was to prove very appealing for large sections of the civilian population too, which was desperate for a change after years of deprivation.

Popular dances spread like an epidemic. Bands and orchestras were quick to react, adjusting to the new situation. Jazz spread by way of the orchestras that played live in the initially makeshift cinemas, helped on its way by imported records and gramophones, and proved especially popular with the intellectual and artistic community, which saw it as a symbol of modernism. The large Bulgarian immigrant community in the USA also helped, along with the propagation of US culture in Bulgaria as government policy in the 1920s – something the Americans were only too happy to nudge along.

The pioneer of jazz in Bulgaria was Boris Leviev (1902-1968), who returned to the country in 1927 after completing his education at the Music Academy in Berlin. He formed an orchestra which played regularly at the Bulgaria Hotel in central Sofia. A similar ensemble was formed by White Russian émigrés; called Rousski Orel [Russian Eagle], it played at the Imperial Bar in Sofia. But the Bulgarians got their first real taste of original American jazz thanks to pianist Sam Wooding and his orchestra, which came to Sofia in 1928 with the Chocolate Kiddies revue.

After the Second World War, communist rule was established in Bulgaria, and jazz struggled to build on the foothold it had begun to establish, as it was seen as undesirably 'Western' by the authorities; however, this in turn led to the establishment of a thriving underground jazz scene, especially among young people.

In the 1960s the regime's greater tolerance towards jazz brought to the forefront the figure of pianist and composer Milcho Leviev, who led the Bulgarian Radio Big Band (1962-1966) and who wrote the first original Bulgarian jazz works of the postwar period. In 1967 his group Focus,65 took part in the First International Jazz Competition for combos in Montreux, Switzerland, where it won the critics' award. In 1968 Focus,65 was recorded by the West German company MPS. Tenor saxophonist Vesselin Nikolov and flautist Simeon Shterev also began getting noticed internationally. 1968 brought a new surprise – the opening of a Department of Pop and Jazz Music at the Music Academy in Sofia; and by the 1970s, Western jazzers started to tour Bulgaria.

Bulgarian jazz also began to develop its own identity, mixing US and Western European influences with local folklore and strands from the Eastern bloc. The collapse of the communist regime at the end of 1989 changed the scene radically. Old contacts were severed, and new ones were established in a different, increasingly integrated European context. Pianist Vasil Parmakov was the major local star at this time. Several European jazzmen, mostly British, came, played and recorded briefly

This picture: The crowd at this year's A To JazZ; right top: leading Bulgarian jazz singer Lilly Ilieva; right bottom: Sofia Cathedral, venue for many memorable concerts

in Bulgaria, but the most important event at this time was the international jazz forum within the Varna Summer Festival (launched in 1926), managed by the classically-trained Russian saxophonist, clarinettist and composer Anatoly Vapirov.

In 1992 Vapirov initiated the jazz festival in Varna, drawing on the best international experience in the field. Thanks to high artistic standards, the Varna festival has become one of the most interesting in Eastern Europe and the best in the Black Sea region. At the same time, the ski resort of Bansko launched its own annual summer jazz festival.

That's a little of the past of jazz in Bulgaria, but what of the future? It looks promising. A listen to our 'Bulgarian Jazz Scene' playlist (see box) will confirm both the quality and distinctiveness of the scene, from the hard-driving acoustic jazz of the Bodurov Trio, through the more electronically flavoured Via Mavis to the understated power of Basil Hadjigrudev's sextet and the angular rhythms of saxophonist Dimitar Liolev. What all these artists share in common is their integration of the textures and sounds of their homeland's culture with wider styles in international jazz.

The live scene is also in constant development, with Bulgaria establishing itself as a 'must-visit' country on the European tour circuit. Multi-artist festivals are particularly important – in September the A To jazZ festival and EJN conference, held in Sofia and reported on by *Jazzwise*, attracted top international acts including Snarky Puppy and John McLaughlin's 4th Dimension. And of course there's the previously-mentioned Varna Summer, known for its emphasis on virtuosity and experimentation; the Bankso festival which attracts audiences of tens of thousands; and Plovdiv Jazz Fest, held in Bulgaria's second city and financed by the Plovdiv township. There are summer and autumn editions of this event, which this year has attracted acts of the calibre of Gretchen Parlato, Yazz Ahmed, Emmet Cohen as well as the cream of local talent.

Bulgaria is also proving itself as a unique European centre of cross-border musical and cultural pollination; straddling Eastern, Western and Southern Europe, and with a vast expat musician population who are increasingly returning to their ancestral land, Bulgaria has a buzzing present and a bright future – maybe it's time you paid a visit and give the music a listen?

Thanks to Vladimir Gadjev for his invaluable historical input.

Your Bulgarian Jazz Scene playlist

Essential sounds from Sofia, Plovdiv and beyond...

1. 'Jovino' by **Bodurov Trio**
2. 'Free Drift' by **Ivan Shopov/Dimitar Bodurov**
3. 'Night Stroll In Black And White' by **Via Mavis**
4. 'Life Is Hard And Then You Die' by **Vasil Hajigrudev Sextet**
5. 'Winter In Montreal' by **Jivko Petrov Trio JP3**
6. 'I Loves You Porgy' by **Lilly Ilieva/ Antoni Donchev**
7. 'Lopata' by **Dimitar Liolev**
8. 'Hip4alga' by **Dimitar Liolev Quartet**
9. 'It's Raining in 7' by **Zhivko Vasilev**
10. 'Lyut Praz' by **Jazzanitza**
11. 'In The Foot of the Mountain' by **Theodosii Spassov/ Hristo Yotsov/Rumen Toskov**
12. 'The Bone Blues' by **The Vili Stoyanov Sextet**

Find an extensive Bulgarian Jazz Scene playlist on Spotify at:
https://bit.ly/3yqo2eF

Left: electro-jazzers Via Mavis; centre: top bassist and composer, Vasil Hajigrudev; right: the hard-driving Bodurov Trio

A Bigger Stride

Kansas Smitty's versatile pianist **Joe Webb's** been busy of late, with his latest album *Summer Chill* showcasing his mix of forward-looking sounds and a love of classic stride piano styles. **Alyn Shipton** caught up with him to find out more

With his recent band album *Summer Chill* on the market, national tours with his trio Webb City, and work with musicians as varied as guitarist Rob Luft, clarinettist Adrian Cox and the Kansas Smitty's collective, Joe Webb is not only one of the UK's busiest pianists, but also one of the most versatile, with a keyboard mastery that transcends ordinary boundaries of genre or style.

His love of jazz goes back to his early childhood. "It was my granddad who got me into piano," he says. "I'd travel over to see him in Basingstoke, and he'd play a range of tunes including some of the songs I play on gigs today. It was just a hobby for him, but whenever he had any spare time, he'd go over to the piano and play. He was just in love with the music. It was that energy from him that got me hooked, when I was around five years old.

"I was growing up in South Wales. We did have a piano in the house, but for a while music took second place because I was hell-bent on being a football player. Then when I was about 12, I realised that music made a lot more sense for me, so I focused less on football and more on the piano. I grew up in Neath, and then did my music degree in Cardiff. When I got to college, all I really knew about jazz piano was pre-bebop, but I began listening to the Bud Powell generation when I got there, and gradually I started to discover Brad Mehldau,

Good Vibrations

Californian vibes virtuoso **Sasha Berliner** is going from strength to strength as her second album, *Onyx*, demonstrates with its A-list line-up and sparkling compositions. **Selwyn Harris** spoke to her about why she's one of the few female vibes players in jazz

Why is it that female vibraphonists tend to take up little more than a footnote in jazz history reference books? Who better to ask than a 22-year-old Californian New York-based vibraphonist-composer Sacha Berliner, a fresh-sounding, exciting new voice on the instrument, who looks like breaking the mould with her recent striking quartet album *Onyx*. For Berliner, the lack of female role models on the vibes has been partly circumstantial but as well the result of a 'history' that doesn't, it could be said, include 'herstory' *[sic]*.

"One of the best vibraphonists who's a woman not alive now is Terry Pollard who ended up wanting to start a family and focus on that and that's why she didn't end up pursuing the vibraphone into later life," she tells me on a call from her New York home. "But she was incredible and was revered by a lot of other jazz musicians, male and female, so I think in that case it's very much circumstantial. There's another female vibraphonist Marjorie Hyams that's a similar story. But I think some of it is also that those vibraphonists have always existed but people have treated women differently back in the day in terms of validity and their capacity to change the scope of jazz. People treated women musicians on other instruments that way so the same is certainly true for the vibraphone. But I think it's definitely changing. Now there are a lot of really strong women vibraphonists. Just as many as male vibraphonists and that's really incredible and I'm super grateful that people are becoming aware of their own prejudices or thoughts that might keep them from uplifting a great woman instrumentalist."

Berliner, who's originally from San Francisco, was introduced to the vibraphone as a last gasp attempt to get a place on the jazz course at California's Oakland School for the Arts.

"I had auditioned as a drummer but they had too many drummers at the time and I was told by a friend that I'd have a better chance of getting into the school if I showed some other percussive knowledge," she says. "So I took her glockenspiel to the audition and played a couple of scales and they got the idea that I would then play the vibraphone and that's how it all started, and I ended up falling in love with it for sure."

Of the big names it was Gary Burton who proved initially the most influential on her favoured four-mallet approach.

"I really liked his approach," she says. "I thought that no one else really played like him. He created a lot of his own language and the solo, and duo, trio playing was really unmatched by anyone before and even still now. I then took a huge liking to both Bobby Hutcherson and Steve Nelson, definitely two of my major influences. I like that they take risks and they're okay about falling flat on their faces if it means some sort of extremely interesting musical idea gets across and their compositions are really beautiful. They just

Keith Jarrett, and Jason Moran.

"Soon I was exploring contemporary music. One of my teachers was Huw Warren, and my lessons with him were so much fun. We talked about all kinds of music and listened deeply to a lot of recordings. As well as broadening my awareness, I really learned about ballad playing from him, because he has such an incredible touch. The band Quercus with him, June Tabor and Iain Ballamy, investigating Welsh music and folk roots, was a big influence on me.

"Another teacher was Richard Roberts, who introduced me to more complex harmonies. But the one who really taught me about the importance of groove and swing was Nick Weldon. I was late for a lesson one day. When I got there he was playing a stride version of 'Don't Blame Me'. It was in my last year, and I asked him to show me how it was done. He opened the door for me to people like Teddy Wilson, and to Fats Waller's left hand technique. I only had a couple of months left at college, after almost four years, and of course that had been a wonderful time, but that lesson with Nick and the few weeks that followed became a turning point for me in terms of finding my own style. I love the sheer joy of stride piano and I've tried to keep that in what I do.

"The final cherry on the cake was a transcription exam. I'd done a transcription of a Jason Rebello solo. What I didn't know was that he was going to mark the paper, and I got back four sheets of A4 with detailed comments and an invitation to work with him on some of the things I'd picked up. Since then he's been a real mentor to me.

"Once I'd graduated, I stayed with family in Basingstoke – close to London but cushioning the financial blow of actually living there. Then I got a call from someone I'd been at college with, asking me if I could do a job in Twickenham, and did I play stride piano? I said yes, and then sat down with a collection of CDs and started to really study them – I had nothing but time on my hands so it was a good moment! I really fell more in love with stride. From then on, the gigs started happening, and I moved to London in 2013. Then I decided to go to Barcelona for a while – mainly for the football. But Giacomo Smith, of Kansas Smitty's fame, offered me a load of gigs. I didn't think I was ready, but the band's guitarist Dave Archer talked me into doing a couple of them. I did, and before I got around to leaving for Barcelona, Giacomo asked me to be on their debut album. So the relationship blossomed, and I never did go to Spain."

Today Joe's in the fortunate position of playing across many different styles, from small swing groups to the contemporary work of Rob Luft. "I'm very grateful to have been part of Rob's musical journey so far,' he says, 'I was on his last two albums and there's another very much on its way."

And in his own music, Webb is working on another album as leader, following on from *Summer Chill*, which will be exploring other genres such as mambo, as well as continuing his stride and swing work with his trio Webb City.

have this unabashed, I want to say, ballsiness to their playing and that was something I was always after in my own playing."

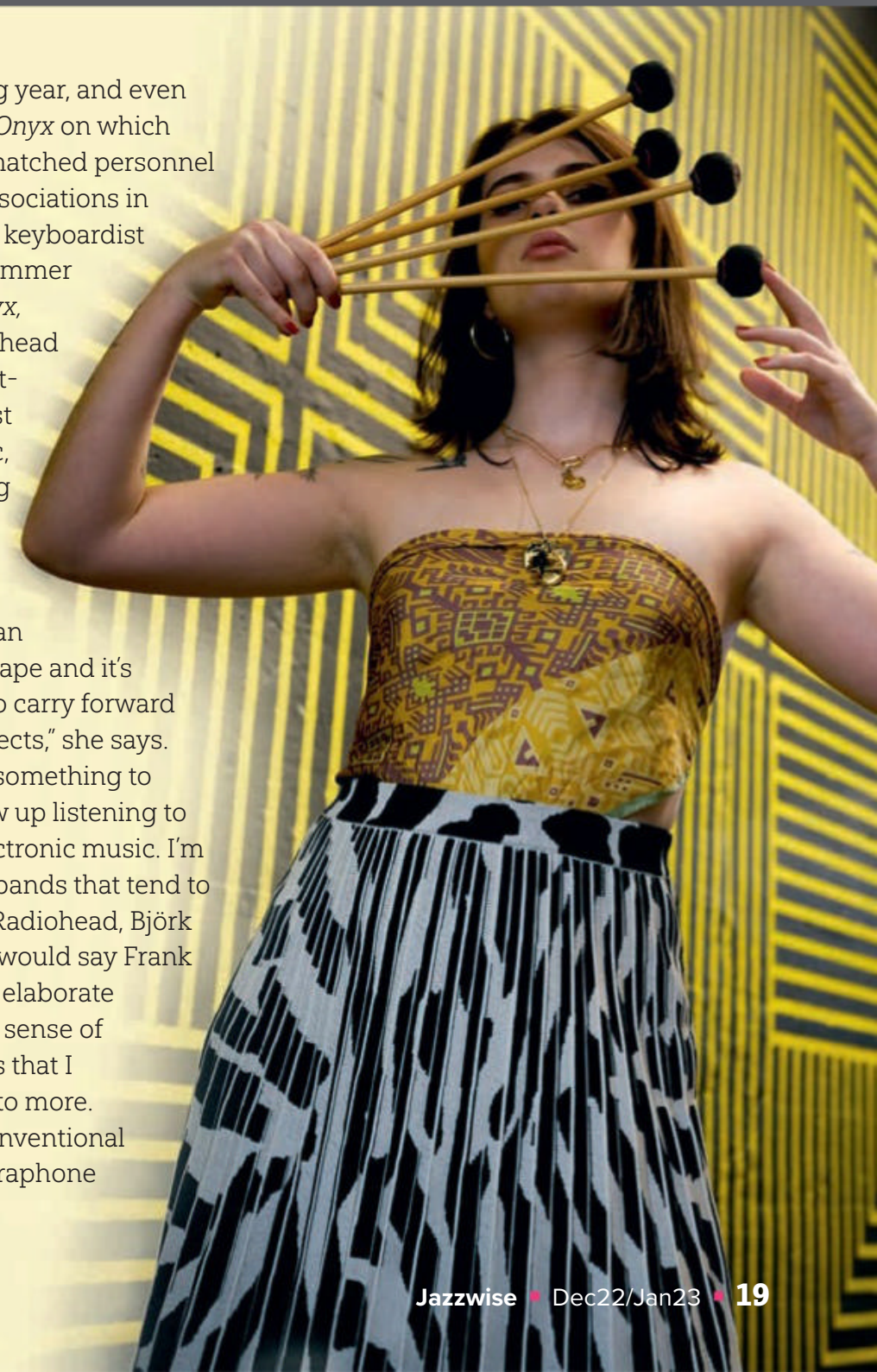
At 18 years old, Berliner upped sticks to New York to attend the prestigious New School where esteemed post-bop vibraphonist Stefon Harris gave her a string of lessons that she says still inspires her to this day.

"He always spoke about speaking like a human voice through the instrument," she says. "Which is interesting because the vibraphone is so percussive that it's so much further from the human voice than a saxophone. I think he really transformed my approach, not only tapping into my own improvisational voice but also in terms of composition and linking harmony to the whole spectrum of emotions and storytelling."

In 2018, she would join the sextet of innovative contemporary music drummer-composer Tyshawn Sorey, who co-ran the Banff residency she had attended on a full-scholarship the previous year. ("He breaks a lot of those conventional jazz theory rules and that's something I like to do in my own music," she explains).

In spite of wearing influences on her sleeve, her unique approach is evident throughout 2019 debut *Azalea*, winning the Rising Star vibraphonist in the *DownBeat* Critics' poll the following year, and even more so on new album *Onyx* on which she enlists an astutely matched personnel honed from previous associations in New York, including the keyboardist James Francies and drummer Marcus Gilmore. On *Onyx,* invigorating head-solo-head structures rooted in post-bop tradition rub against intoxicatingly enigmatic, contemporary-sounding sonic soundscapes, both texturally and harmonically.

"I really like creating an interesting sonic landscape and it's something that I hope to carry forward in all of my original projects," she says. "I think a lot of that has something to do with the music I grew up listening to which was rock and electronic music. I'm super-interested in the bands that tend to meld both of them like Radiohead, Björk and The Flaming Lips. I would say Frank Zappa too. He has these elaborate compositions but also a sense of humour and a goofiness that I definitely want to tap into more. I like challenging the conventional presentations of the vibraphone throughout history."



SPIRITS FLYING HIGH

Albert Ayler was a progenitor of free and spiritual jazz, an innovator whose influence on the music is profound. With the astonishing *Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings* capturing the saxophonist at the peak of his otherworldly powers just months before his untimely and mysterious death aged 34, **Stuart Nicholson** assesses his career and the complex personality that shaped his singular sound

When saxophonist Albert Ayler was found floating in New York's East River in 1970 at the age of 34, it marked the end of a troubled period in his life. It was the same year that Jimi Hendrix died; two shooting stars who had lit up the night sky and who were abruptly silenced in their prime. And like Hendrix, the rumour mill went into overdrive, especially in Ayler's case, when the New York Medical Examiner ruled that he had died by "asphyxia by submersion – circumstances undetermined."

What were those circumstances? Soon stories of dark deeds were circulating among musicians: a shooting by the Police, the Mafia or drug dealers, despite the coroner's report indicating there were no bullet wounds and that people close to Ayler said he did not do drugs. Another rumour connected him with the mistress of a Mafia boss, while still another had him tied to a jukebox before being thrown into the East River.

No one can be sure what caused Ayler's death, but what we do know is that two years earlier, he had fired his brother Donald from his band (Donald subsequently suffered a mental breakdown). It was something that filled Albert with remorse. Subsequently, their mother spent hours on the phone with Albert pressurising him to re-hire his sibling – this at a time when Albert was believed to have had mental health issues of his own. Ayler's wife, Mary Parks, later came forward to say that in her opinion, family pressure had been the cause of Albert's death, while his sister claimed she had tried to talk Albert out of taking his own life, to which he apparently responded: "My blood has got to be shed to save my mother and my brother."

But in the end, it was, perhaps, a culmination of issues in addition to those surrounding his brother – his relationship with his wife had reached breaking point, he had recently lost his recording contract with Impulse!, causing him to worry he might become a marginal figure, while certain musicians and critics had been putting it about, he was a charlatan and a 'traitor to the black cause'.

A catalyst and a visionary, he seemed to be moving too fast during his lifetime to gain purchase on his value system, while his mysterious death initially overshadowed his legacy. His music made ruthless demands of the listener: his fullness of tone, fondness for arbitrary overstatement and his slippery tonality today come roaring out of the speakers with the aggression and self-confidence of a brilliantly creative spirit unconcerned with creating a gulf between his music and his audience. Yet in recent years that gulf has gradually narrowed, more through rock and metal fans who saw in Ayler's music an antidote to rock's consumerist impulses, than jazz fans who took a while to realise he may have been one of the music's most original voices.

> ***"Music is one of the gifts God has given to us... It should be used for good works"***

It was all so different when Albert Ayler first embarked on his musical odyssey. Seen as a prodigy on saxophone, he grew up in a middle-class family in Cleveland, Ohio. A musically-inclined father provided early music lessons, followed by formal lessons at the Benny Miller School of Music and – from age 10 to 18 – the Cleveland Academy of Music. He played in school bands, marching bands, in church and in community centres. He gave recitals at the Hampton Social Settlement, and at the age of 12, the local press praised his solo sax recital. While in high school he took up golf, and within two years was playing off scratch – he became captain of the John Adams Golf Team and he won the City Golf Club Annual Tournament, a major event in the Cleveland black community. Years later he claimed that he could easily have become a golfer, but added: "music was in my heart."

In 1953 and 1954, he spent the summer vacations touring with bluesman Little Walter and his band, and the following

summer with Lloyd Price, both crucial formative experiences that were some distance from the middle-class neighbourhood that had shaped his life experiences until then. He also began researching and studying music played in black churches, which would later find voice in compositions such as 'Ghosts,' 'Holy Family' and 'Holy Holy.' He graduated in 1955, and with his stylish wardrobe, earned a reputation as a ladies' man. For the time being, he took a non-musical job with a manufacturing company Thompson-Ramo-Wooldrige, enabling him to buy a green and silver Cadillac. He formed a relationship with Carrie Roundtree, who in 1957 became pregnant. However, the day before her first support payment was due, he enlisted in the US Army.

At Fort Knox, PFC Ayler became a member of the Regimental Big Band, and, as he hoped, the army provided him with a rounded, formal music education. Posted to France, he absorbed French military music as much as the music of Ornette Coleman from recordings. He enjoyed the uplifting French national anthem 'La Marseillaise,' a tune he referenced throughout his career. By now he was developing a wholly original style, recasting gospel influences through the prism of free jazz. But when he sat-in at local French jazz clubs, audiences and musicians found his music and powerful tone disconcerting. While on leave, he travelled north, to Denmark and Sweden, where he found audiences and musicians more accepting.

On discharge, he struggled to find acceptance for his music. Returning to Stockholm, even avant garde guitarist Ingemar Bocker could not help wonder, "Is this the Emperor's new clothes?". Ayler made his first album in Stockholm, *Something Different!!!!!*, a limited release. Reviewing it in 1963, Lars Werner of *Orkester Journalen* noted: "Musical development in his playing almost exclusively appears to be limited to tonal aspects. In this sense his approach to melodies plays no role." Ayler may have been

Photo: Philippe Gras

Clockwise from top: Steve Tintweiss, Ayler, Mary Parks at Fondation Maeght, July, 1970. (photo by Philippe Gras); Ayler in 1966; at the Fondation Maeght, 27 July, 1970 (Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir)

a virtuoso musician, but he sounded deceptively primitive, with a tone so huge and played at such a volume it belied his modest stature (his Army records show he was 66 inches tall). Three months later, shortly before returning to the US, he recorded *My Name Is Albert Ayler*.

Settling in Harlem, he played with Cecil Taylor, where he felt musically at home, but paying work was in short supply. In early 1964, he recorded *Spirits* (later re-released as *Witches & Devils*) with Norman Howard on trumpet, Henry Grimes on bass and Sonny Murray on drums. A second album from the session, *Swing Low, Sweet Spiritual* with Call Cobbs on piano in Howard's stead, was released a decade later. *Spirits* is Ayler's first mature statement on record. Sound, not harmony, was his guiding star, and beyond the reassuring certainties of 4/4 rhythm on, for example, the title track and 'Holy, Holy,' everything else was up for grabs. Like Rorschach ink blots, Ayler's music was then, and still is, many things to many people, but more importantly, *Spirits* was a way station towards greater things to come.

The impact of his next album, *Spiritual Unity*, for the fledgling ESP-Disk label, with Gary Peacock on bass and Sonny Murray on drums, has been long lasting. The album, which many consider his finest, is a convincing elaboration of the freedom principle.

"It wasn't just that he could play free or that he invented playing free," said Carla Bley, "he played beautiful melodies and that's just something people respond to."

Three years later Ayler explained the inspiration behind the album: "When we let the will of God produce itself in us, we will work with Him, and will be blessed in all our actions."

His faith was such it enabled him to deal with rejection, setbacks and financial struggle with remarkable equanimity and an absence of bitterness that many musicians felt as work became scarce with the rise of pop and rock music in the 1960s.

A week after recording *Spiritual Unity*, Ayler's group, plus saxophonist John Tchicai, trombonist Roswell Rudd and trumpeter Don Cherry, recorded *New York Eye And Ear Control* for ESP. Here, Ayler is the lead voice, his congregation interacting with his powerful musical gestures, declarations, and provocations, rather than challenging them. But sitting in at New York clubs was still a problem; he was invariably met with a hostile response. Taking his band to Europe, he said, "American-minded people are not listening to music any more... we wanted to leave to give some of our love to someone who would really sit and listen and be quiet." Performances at the Montmartre Club, Copenhagen were documented as *The Copenhagen Tapes*, and met mixed reviews. As the tour pressed on through Europe, he was encouraged by more open-minded audiences; this was the 1960s, when established convention was being challenged at every level of society.

Back in the US, Cherry was replaced by Ayler's brother Donald on trumpet, who had recently taken up the instrument.

"What you don't know I'll teach you," enthused Albert, "stay natural." Donald was discouraged from learning to read music: "All readers are devils." Ayler's embrace of the 'Godzilla Principle', whereby ugly was beautiful, saw Amiri Baraka arguing beauty within "obvious ugliness" required a new aesthetic of listening. Yet against the backdrop of the Civil Rights struggle, Ayler never saw his music as embodying social protest; instead, inspired by his faith, he saw it as music of love and goodwill. At a concert of black music at the Village Gate on 28 March, 1965 (which included John Coltrane, Sun Ra, Graham Moncur III and others), Ayler performed 'Holy Ghost', explaining, "Music is one of the gifts God has given to us. It should be used for good works."

Because of the obvious technical limitations of Donald's trumpet playing, Albert began to recalibrate his music in order to accommodate his brother's musical shortcomings: simplifying themes, hymns and spirituals and using more repetition of thematic material (for example, his abstracted 'La Marseillaise'). Later in the year came *Spirits Rejoice*, Max Harrison writing in *Jazz Monthly* said that Ayler seemed set to become a major figure in post-Coltrane jazz – he felt that by rejecting the European element in his music, free jazz had the potential of becoming an entirely independent, self contained music in its own right.

On 1 May, 1966, Ayler played Slug's Saloon on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, with Donald on trumpet, Michael Samson on violin, Lewis Worrell on bass and Ronald Shannon Jackson on drums. *Albert Ayler Quintet Live at Slug's Saloon Volumes 1 and 2*, segues themes into one continuous performance, with Ayler expressing a preference for playing off simple themes, moving from simplicity to the more dense textures, simplicity again and on into more complex sounds. It's considered to be among Ayler's finest albums, despite its low fidelity, and 'Truth Is Marching In,' 'Ghosts' and 'Bells' are among the uninhibited highlights.

Shortly after Slug's, he guested with the John Coltrane Quintet at the Village Vanguard, and it is here, perhaps, his

lasting legacy in jazz can be found. His influence, albeit at one remove, on the music of Coltrane's final period, saw the saxophonist taking a leaf out Ayler's book by exploring sound as a thing in itself. He also incorporated Ayler's use of voice and bagpipes into his music. Shortly afterwards, Ronald Shannon Jackson left, as very little money was involved in an Ayler gig – "We'd get a few gigs but nobody would come." Around this time Ayler met Mary Parks at Count Basie's, a late night Harlem grill famous for its chicken and waffles. Parks was 16 years older than Ayler, and depending on whose stories you believe, she was either stabilising or controlling.

Not having worked since his engagement at Slug's, when Ayler was offered a European tour, he snapped it up, forming a new band with Donald, Samson on violin, Bill Folwell on bass and Beaver Harris on drums. Several recordings have emerged documenting this tour, including *The Berlin Concerts 1966* and several bootlegs. When the band appeared in London they were beset with difficulties from the start, with zealous customs officials strip searching the band for drugs, but finding none. However, the band did drink, with Donald standing on his head during the plane trip into England, which may have piqued the Customs official's interest. On 15 November, 1966 they recorded a two hour concert at LSE for the BBC2 series *Jazz Goes to College*, the event subsequently acquiring a certain notoriety when the BBC refused to broadcast the programme.

After the tour, Ayler moved into Mary Parks' apartment on Dean Street, Brooklyn. Her relationship with Albert quickly growing to the point where she organised his business affairs, Donald telling one journalist, "Mary kept him at home with her. She kept him away from everybody else and monopolised him... I thought Al was going in the wrong direction." Albert, for his part seemed to get much from their relationship, not least since Parks had an office job that provided the financial stability for him to pursue his music. Gradually, she began to change this as well – Ayler had never sung during his performances, but after meeting her he never failed to. A concert the following year at the Village Theatre, was produced by Parks, who hired the hall and arranged the advertising, and emcee'd the concert, which was recorded by Impulse! at the behest of John Coltrane. Together with tracks recorded at the Village Vanguard, *Albert Ayler In Greenwich Village*, is generally regarded as being his best album for the label.

> ***"We wanted to leave to give some of our love to someone who would really sit and listen and be quiet"***
>
> – Ayler on taking his band to Europe

His next album, also highly thought of, was *Love Cry*, which documents the last recorded appearance of Donald with his brother. Experimental but accessible, with simple, often diatonic, themes and militaristic rhythms, it had Call Cobbs on harpsichord on five of the 11 tracks, with Alan Silva on bass and Milford Graves on drums. Reasons vary why Donald was subsequently fired by his brother, those most commonly cited were a drinking problem, Parks' desire for more control, and Impulse!'s desire for a more commercial approach.

Next came *New Grass*, using music Parks claimed to have written before she met Ayler. "Here was Ayler singing lead on AM-radio pop songs and superimposing his unhinged sax skronk over funk, soul, and rock rhythms," said the *Pitchfork* website. Ayler's last studio album was *Music Is the Healing Force of the Universe*, with Parks credited as writing all the music and lyrics. Success eluded these final two Impulse! discs, leading to Ayler being shown the exit door. But the aura of otherworldliness that surrounded Ayler's music did not die with those two albums.

Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings (INA/Elemental), which has topped this year's *Jazzwise* Reissue & Archive Critics' Poll, is a 4-CD/3-LP set of the two concerts performed on 25 and 27 July, 1970. They are the last known Ayler recordings, and revealed him moving in a fresh musical direction. This was heralded by the degree to which Mary Parks had been integrated into Ayler's music, and by the inclusion of five of the six tracks from *Music Is The Healing Force of the Universe*, and three outtakes from that session (that were later included in 1971 on *The Last Album*), all written by Parks, "They go nuts for my work," she said later, "even at the Maeght Foundation."

Even though three band members had never played together before the engagement, and the band did not rehearse prior to the concert, they coalesced well , with Ayler on saxes, musette and vocals , Parks on soprano and vocals, Call Cobbs on piano, Steve Tintweiss bass, and Allen Blairman on drums; they are collectively united by Parks' and Ayler's saxophones, who had clearly got things worked out between them.

Mary Parks (also known as Mary Maria) effectively co-stars alongside Ayler – for example, she narrates on the opening number of the set, 'Music is the Healing Force of the Universe'; adds wordless vocal to colour Ayler's improvisations on 'Birth of Mirth'; has her own solo feature on soprano sax on 'Masonic Inborn' and she even walks the sacred ground of 'Holy, Holy,' featuring on soprano alongside Ayler. Despite naysayers from Ayler's circle claiming she was a "music primitive," and "a beginner," she was much better than that. The final concert concludes with her vocalised closing statement, with Ayler responding to calls for an encore, saying, "I would say something, but I can't talk. I've been blowing too hard." It was the final thing he ever recorded – and four months later he was hauled out of the East River.

Grateful thanks to Richard Koloda's excellent biography 'Holy Ghost: The Life And Death Of Free Jazz Pioneer Albert Ayler', research from which is used in this feature.

Mother of Invention

Trumpeter **Laura Jurd**'s star ascended thanks to a genre-smashing approach that combines the accessible and the avant garde, not least with her Mercury-nominated band Dinosaur. Becoming a mother has ushered in a new phase of music-making with *The Big Friendly Album,* just released on her own label. Jurd tells **Andy Robson** how positivity and parenthood are shaping her music now

Is the Dinosaur extinct?

"Dinosaur is alive and well and I'm beginning to think what the next Dinosaur project would feel or look like," grins Laura Jurd, a little mischievously.

Jurd's name is most readily associated with Dinosaur, the quartet of herself on trumpet, Elliot Galvin's keys, bassist Conor Chaplin and drummer Corrie Dick. The group has gaarnered critical and commercial plaudits from the day they joined forces as students at Trinity Laban over a decade ago.

But now, a whole new project consumes Jurd (and one guesses hubby Galvin): a project of infinite variety, life changing prospects, endless pleasure yet years of bloody hard work, risk management and unpredictable outcomes, no matter how much creative energy you pour in.

"You know I've had a baby, little Henry, he's eight and a half months now," she says.

Jurd can't help bubble with a heart-warming enthusiasm that even Zoom can't flatten. It would be easy to assume that her joyous new solo project *The Big Friendly Album*, with its reference to a Roald Dahl children's book, and titles like 'Henry' and 'Sleepless' directly relates to Henry's arrival in the world.

"Except it was January 2020 when I started writing," so Henry wasn't even the proverbial glimmer, "and I had that title from the beginning. A manifesto almost. I wanted something of my own that was big, more compositional, but a jazz band thing. And joyful, friendly, welcoming."

So Jurd wasn't even "thinking of children specifically" as she set about the writing process that would lead to *The BFA*. But perhaps it was no surprise she was trying to cheer up herself and the world around her. It was after all the month President Trump sent Kim Jong-un birthday greetings, Parliament authorised Brexit and the WHO declared Covid-19 a public health emergency. And things weren't going to get better.

> ***"I wanted something of my own that was big, more compositional, but a jazz band thing. And joyful, friendly, welcoming"***

Jurd began the writing process as she always does.

"I think of the instrumentation. As I wanted this big welcoming sound, brass came to mind immediately. I'd been listening to a lot of Lester Bowie's Brass Fantasy stuff, and of course my teacher Chris Batchelor was hugely influenced by Bowie, so there'd been an influence (from Bowie) before I'd even realised it."

The American brass quartet The Westerlies, vigorously energetic and melodic, who mix a variety of genres, often with a radical edge, were also being listened to. "So this felt like a good home for some brass writing."

So in came Martin Lee Thompson's euphonium: he'd played on Jurd's 2019's 'solo' project, *Stepping Back, Jumping In* and first got to know Jurd through a big band project the trumpeter had facilitated at Trinity. Thompson's colleague in the deliciously-monikered Dopey Monkey, tuba player Danielle Price, was then an obvious recruit, especially as Dopey Monkey has its own manifesto to promote all things in the lower end of brass in the highest number of musical contexts.

Ruth Goller's electric bass, slightly overdriven, more edgy in attitude, also marks *The BFA* out from Dinosaur related projects.

"I always knew it was going to be electric (bass). Ruth has a unique sound, she comes from more of a rock and punk world as she enters the jazz zone, unlike Conor Chaplin who is so steeped in the jazz language. I love that gritty edge; that grit is really nice on the shuffly, groovy, New Orleans-y material here. If something sounds a little twee (although sometimes twee is nice), she brings a bit of oomph! And it really changes how I improvise: I can get to a grittier place with Ruth taking us there, and it affects how Corrie plays too."

Relatively unknown, Alex Gaines can also add a rock edge through his guitar work, but what really appealed to Jurd was his flexibility. This is a band that can turn on a sixpence between 'Nawlins second line verve, Norwegian spaciousness and Scottish folk – "over 50 per cent of this band is Scottish if you include my half!" laughs Jurd, referring to her Edinburgh-born mum. So Gaines' ability "at finding the right sound for the right song" is crucial.

But what really defines *The Big Friendly Album* as separate from Dinosaur is the sparing keyboard use. Galvin's visionary use of electronic keys gave the quartet a signature sound, splashing around in every style from synth-pop to fusion. Here though, with no Galvin, it's Jurd's pared down piano chordings or picked out melodies that creates more space, less fuss, and melodies that are allowed to breathe.

And in a further twist of difference, Jurd privileges the cornet over trumpet. Not that you'd readily tell the difference.

"I don't know if I can hear the difference and I play the thing!" laughs Jurd. "They're very similar instruments. And I play the cornet in a very trumpet way just to confuse things further."

Jurd acquired the American long model cornet during the first summer lockdown of 2020.

"Miles played a Martin Committee and I have a Martin Committee trumpet from that era: the 1950s were the Golden Age for these instruments. I saw this cornet come up on the internet, and on a whim, the madness of that summer, I bought it. Normally you'd try the instrument but because of the situation I got it delivered. And it was just the most beautiful of instruments!"

If Jurd went out on a limb to acquire her cornet, she wishes she'd gone even further out to better employ Frode Haltli's accordion.

"The guests really lift this recording – Finn Peters' flute on 'Fuzzy' for example – and I was absolutely thrilled that Frode agreed to do it. I'm hugely influenced by a lot of Norwegian music across the generations. He was the only 'guest' I didn't know and had I realised he was going to record I'd have made more space for him to improvise. But it was such a last-minute thing! However, what he chooses to do in such a small space is really great. I wouldn't have written anything like 'Clouds' without hearing him. On that track, where he improvises with me, it's so subtle, so delicate."

Subtle and delicate aren't words often associated with another Norwegian composer, Hedvig Mollestad. Mollestad, the mother of two youngsters, explores the experience of motherhood on her last two solo releases, *Ekhidna* and *Maternity Beat*. The latter is released contemporaneously with *The BFA* and is big and scary as Jurd's is big and friendly. Like Jurd, Mollestad is influenced by Miles, but melds his *Live/Evil* era into epic meditations on the nature and experience of motherhood. Mollestad's position counterpoints Jurd's as

she rails against horrors perpetrated against mothers and children, notably those killed on enforced migrations.

Jurd is in a different place on her parenting journey, and *The Big Friendly Album* may pre-date her maternity, but motherhood now shapes how Jurd plays and creates.

"For practical reasons, at the beginning, I was doing a lot (of the childcare). But increasingly we are sharing it out. Elliot and I lead similar lives career wise. People often ask us both to write (for them) which is lovely although we write quite differently... we are both doing exactly the same kind of stuff while still sharing the parenting role. Rather than feeling this is difficult or impossible to work, we've just changed the process. For example, I have a couple of projects for the LJF right now, so when Henry naps we have to make the most of that. You have to be really organised. For that hour, hour and a half you have to make (composing) decisions. You don't have the luxury of pondering over a piece for hours and hours. Which could be a good thing. There's that Bernstein quote that the best pieces are made when there isn't enough time."

> ***"There's that Bernstein quote that the best pieces are made when there isn't enough time"***

Such sunburst intensity of writing is very different to how many composers experienced lockdown, for example. Trish Clowes, Olivia Murphy and Mary Halvorson have all described the affordances of increased creative time for themselves.

But for Jurd (and Galvin) now having Henry, it's about "having to adapt. You have to be very smart with your time. We're lucky Henry's in a good routine. He'll tend to sleep at the same time. But it's easier said than done. 'Oh, it's 7 o'clock: let's do some composing!' And of course in that hour you have to do the washing, the cooking. But he has a lovely temperament. Now I put a mute in the cornet because I feel it's way too loud for his little ears. But he is interested to watch me play. He's at that age when all he wants to do is pull himself up and stand up. So I'm making practice part of being with him. It's less focussed perhaps (than previous practice regimes), but it's playing with him, and playing with him."

"I'm not practising as much, for obvious reasons, so I do 'Here The Tale Ends', (*The BFA*'s closer) a little different live. In another life I may have delivered that with ease!"

But Jurd appears unfussed. Swapping concert perfection for a little soul is a deal she's happy to make.

Jurd hasn't spoken much to previous generations of brass players, Annie Whitehead for example, whose choices around womanhood in a male world often fuelled by alcohol and machismo competition, were cruelly limited when starting out.

But Jurd remains aware of the privilege of her position,

"Through the example of my mother, through always having female teachers, I've always felt comfortable in my own skin... I've moved in open minded progressive spaces like contemporary music and jazz. But there are spaces I wouldn't want to hang out in.

"I think, hope, a lot has progressed... Being in the thick of it I can totally respect the decision to put your career to one side for a few years. And I could have done that very happily. But I chose to carry on and I think it is good to show that it is possible.

"I'm not going to lie; it's been really difficult sometimes. I'd have so much to say to any young musician, mother to be, who'd want to ask me about this. I've not toured so much but I have played gigs with Henry around, feeding and things like that. It's different every time and I'd have a lot of advice for people. I want to remember it ALL! In 10 years I'll probably have forgotten everything!! But I'd love to talk with people asking things like "My baby's three months old, should I play this gig?' I wouldn't say 'Yes', or 'No'. But I could say you may want to consider this or that."

Now that would be a course to build into a conservatoire or NYJO or let's face it, any place of young musical learning. Oh, hellfire, any place of learning. Along with 'Being Dad', of course. Good practice isn't just the notes you play. Ask Henry.

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SCAN FOR TICKETS

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Mercurial Norwegian saxophonist Marius Neset has been blazing his own trail for the past decade with a run of epic orchestral jazz albums, yet his latest release, *Happy*, is a band effort with a group of gifted Scandi-Brit stars. Hugh Morris caught up with him to discover the roots of the project's positivity

The world is burning, the UK economy is tanking, and the threads that bind human life are stretched to breaking point. In these bleak times, tortured creative souls are our allies, emerging from immense artistic strife with reasons for hope, for continued existence.

Okay, so maybe making music isn't always *that* high-minded. But what happens when a musician decides to sidestep artistic struggle, pass over global turmoil, and rustle up an overwhelmingly positive album instead? The latest from Marius Neset provides an answer to that question.

The tenor player's new album wasn't always going to be called *Happy*. "It feels like a very honest title," he says via video link from his home on the outskirts of Oslo. "Some people might think it is very banal, and simple. But to me, it's just a title that's very descriptive of what was going on, both with the process and the recording."

With his new quintet – all change from previous Neset incarnations (save for mainstay drummer Anton Eger) – he compares the studio atmosphere to his breakthrough debut *Golden Xplosion*, with former teacher Django Bates. Here, Neset, Eger, Connor Chaplin, Elliot Galvin and Magnus Hjorth met for the first time, and recorded from nine in the morning until nine at night for a whole week. A couple of behind-the-scenes clips on Neset's Instagram suggest it was a hoot, but there's still a distance to go with the project: a tour and another album with the same lineup is in the diary. ("Now I know what it sounds like," Neset adds.)

> ***"It's even more important to take care of these happy moments"***

Since he burst onto the scene with two albums on Edition Records [*Golden Xplosion* and *Birds*, his equally frenetic follow-up from 2013], Marius Neset has been steadily moving out of the shadow of the titanic tenor players he's been frequently compared to: Michael Brecker, for the muscular virtuosity; and Jan Garbarek, for the smoothness of sound and the easy links around instrument and nationality. Neset's route to a musical realm on his own terms has been largely created by stepping out of the jazz club and into the concert hall: recent composition projects for large ensemble and improvisers, informed by Stravinsky, Bartók and Messiaen, have made Neset the go-to guy for jazz-classical crossover.

Crossover! A *QI*-style alarm goes off above behind my head. "I hate the word crossover," Neset says. "I just take whatever I have and try to integrate it into my world." But it's true that *Happy* represents a different tack for the Neset of recent years, who has worked closely with the London Sinfonietta on three big composition projects – 'Viaduct', 'Snowmelt' and this year's BBC Proms commission 'Geyser' – and with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra on his excellent saxophone concerto 'MANMADE'. He later notes that this autumn marks the first time in seven years where he doesn't have a deadline for a commission.

And it's also true that Neset sounds more like a composer – or rather, *a classical composer* – with each passing day. Neset values the timbral colour added by the microtonal variations of Elliott Galvin's keyboards, he explains his mazy interlocking polyrhythms in precise, thorough detail, and the aspect Neset dedicates the most time to is large-scale shape, whether it be songs, improvisations, albums or concertos. A good while spent in the world of ensemble composition has seeped into his quintet writing, as he notes: "When I asked the musicians to be part of the record, I said 'it's going to be shorter tunes with lead sheets'. When they got the charts, every tune was 10 to 15 pages long, which is what those last years have done to me. Listen, for me, that was a lead sheet – I've been busy composing 300-page scores."

Happy is a major departure from that soundworld. Take the sentimental ballad 'A Hand To Hold', or the title track, which has more than a hint of Mario Kart to it. It's not that Neset's music hasn't explored such characteristics before – take the happy-go-lucky 'Life Goes On', or the melancholy perambulation of 'Prague's Ballet' – more that the reference points are different, unexpected. Earth, Wind & Fire is one, Stevie Wonder another, Headhunters a third.

A better title for this album might have been 'relief', a musical exhalation removed from big themes explored recently – the environmental crisis, fatherhood, Ukraine – and prompted, in part, by a period of personal happiness. The past three years have seen a few big life changes for Neset. In 2019, he moved to Oslo, after living in Copenhagen for 16 years. "The plan was never to end up in Oslo, but I've got a girlfriend, and now we have two kids," he says with a laugh. "It's a new life." His last ACT album was called *A New Dawn,* and was both Neset's first venture into solo records and a reflection of his changed situation.

Neset's children are in their infancy – one two-and-a-half, the other five months old. "It gives me so much life," he says of fatherhood, "and I also think that it does something to the music

in some way." It's a balancing act, as Neset has learned how to prioritise properly: "You're in work the whole 24 hours of a day, but it gives you so much energy... but it's harder to be able to go away and tour. It's not so fun to be away for a long time," he adds, sadly.

With his return to Norway, Neset has also reconnected with a different group of Norwegian players. He's back playing with bassist Arild Andersen, one of the founding fathers of the Norwegian jazz scene.

"It's a different generation, and it's very interesting to hear them talking about time. They don't think about pulse, but more waves – you're always playing over waves, not from bar to bar, which makes a lot of sense."

The musician Neset has developed that idea best with is Eger, who co-wrote four tunes on the album, and who he estimates having played a thousand gigs with since they first worked together in 2003: "When we meet, he can already play everything I've written, and has added his own things in a way that only he can do. There's a reason that I've had him on so many of my projects."

What of the critics who might claim that *Happy* looks too much to the past?

"If it gives people a nostalgic feeling, then I think it's great," he replies. "I want people to feel that they've heard it before. That's not a bad thing." But there are new aspects featured here, too, he argues: on one of the tracks, there's a bass line in tripletted 5/4, that shifts to a groove in six, all inspired by a Ligeti piano etude. "I haven't done that before," he says.

Sentimental feelings aren't completely foreign for Neset, though.

"*Happy* can give a nostalgic feeling to me too," he says. "At least in the tune 'Happy', there was a lot of nostalgia in it. But still, it's in 15/8, and people didn't play in 15/8 so much in the 1970s."

"The last interview I did asked, 'why can you call a record *Happy in* these times, when there's much bad stuff going on in the world'," he concludes. "It's a good question, but at the same time it's even more important to take care of these happy moments. And that's what it was to me."

There's a different energy to Neset's music now, like it's been reborn. Where it'll go next is anybody's guess.

Photo: Roar Vestad

EDMOND HALL AND THE AFRICAN DREAM

In this 'Christmas fairytale' by **Val Wilmer**, we learn how New Orleans clarinettist **Edmond Hall** discovered Africa, played with Louis Armstrong, and met the Duke of Edinburgh... as well as the author's own encounters with the great man

Romantically speaking, fairy tales and New York are certainly connected, although few can be said to have begun in the drunk tank – as the Pogues' greatest anthem would have it – or, for that matter, on the Bowery.

For a century or more, the Bowery was New York's Skid-Row, a place of squalid bars, broken-down tenements and stinking hovels. Of broken people as much as a street of broken dreams.

You will know the famous photographs. They were the work of Jacob A Riis, journalist and reformer, the first person to use photography to raise public awareness of social injustice by showing the squalour he found on the Bowery. He did it by working out how to get enough light inside those dark hovels to use a camera; his 1890 *How The Other Half Lives* is the first book to be illustrated with documentary photographs.

The first time I went to New York, I was taken on a sight-seeing tour of the Bowery; going to look at the derelicts and drunkards was still considered an appropriate pastime for visitors in 1962. Many another outsider has reported doing likewise, from the journalist Charles Graves, brother of Robert, to Simone de Beauvoir, but few of them had the same impact as Riis. And yet, a century after he took those pictures, the Bowery was still a pretty rough place, with musicians (among others) spending their days there, after having fallen on hard times. A friend of mine, married to a well-known musician, worked in the Men's Shelter and told me their stories. I well recall my dismay on learning that one of my favourite guitarists was among them.

But despite its doss houses and destitution, life on the Bowery was not all about impoverishment of spirit. For many with business in the district, life went on as usual and, for New Orleans clarinettist Edmond Hall, a chance encounter on those same mean streets at the end of the 1950s marked the start of a Christmas fairy tale of his own.

Now, there was nothing down-at-heel about Hall. Born in 1901, he had an impeccable pedigree and was the epitomy of what you would expect of a musician of that era. He was already a respected professional when he made his name as house clarinettist at New York's Cafe Society in 1939 and became bandleader there for the next seven years. Hall was one of the first artists to record for Blue Note in this period when the new label's productions were issued on 10-inch shellac discs, played with a needle and spun at 78 revolutions per minute. His band included several extraordinary musicians, among them guitarist Charlie Christian and pianists James P. Johnson and Meade Lux Lewis, each of them a master in their respective category.

I was lucky enough to see Hall at work on two occasions. The first time was when I was a teenager. Louis Armstrong brought his All-Stars to London's rambling Earls Court arena for a series of concerts, and at the end of their tour, I went to the airport to see the band leave town, *en route* for Ghana.

This was when I photographed Louis and managed to get his, and Hall's, autographs. The second time was in 1962, when he was touring Britain as a soloist with the band of trombonist Chris Barber, and I sat in on a rehearsal in Oxford Street at the old Marquee.

I never got to know Hall, but I did learn his remarkable story. It was some time afterwards and was probably told to me by double-bassist Gene Ramey, the man who drove me round Harlem and the Bowery all those years earlier. I can't vouch for its authenticity, but as I recall, it went something like this.

Hall was in a bar on the Bowery one day when he fell into conversation with an itinerant stranger. He summed up his new aquaintance, an intelligent young man with good manners, and because he liked what he saw, invited him home for a meal and to try on a couple of suits that he felt might be a good fit.

At his apartment on Stebbins Avenue in the Bronx, the guest relaxed and chatted as Winifred Hall offered food and hospitality. Afterwards, they talked about Ghana. The act of setting foot on African soil had had a profound effect on Louis Armstrong, and so it had been, too, with Hall. Louis himself had been unable to attend the country's Independence celebrations in March 1957, but wife Lucille had accepted the invitation of future President Kwame Nkrumah and been well-received. Africa and the forward march of events on the continent were under discussion not only in progressive and activist circles but among musicians as well.

Like many an African American, as far back as the Emancipation proclamation, Hall harboured the desire to make a contribution to affairs in the Ancestral Continent.

Main picture: Edmond Hall, 1956; Inset left: Edmond Hall with Chris Barber's Ian Wheeler at Marquee rehearsal, Oxford Street, 1962; Inset right: Jazz journalist Peter Clayton pours tea for Edmond Hall during a break (inset photos by Val Wilmer)

He told his visitor that he felt he had the potential to do something worthwhile with music but when the stranger said that he could help him to realise this plan, he was understandably surprised.

You, the young man told him, are the first person to show kindness to me since I've been down on my luck. Now I can do something for you. He was, it transpired, a 'remittance man' of some kind, paid to stay away from his wealthy family because of his drinking. He wanted to help someone who had shown warmth and generosity to him, and thus it was that Hall unexpectedly found himself living the fairy tale.

At the start of October 1959, he headed for Ghana with Winifred, supported by financial assistance from his new friend and with the aim of setting up a music studio in the capital, Accra.

The journey turned out to be a frustrating experience for an American in Africa, unaccustomed to African ways. In the three months that followed, Hall secured work for a quartet at a hotel in Accra, only to have his patience severely tried. The musicians he wanted to play with, the only ones he could find whom he considered up to his standard, were all employed at the radio station and were, therefore, unavailable on a regular basis. Even ET Mensah, the trumpeter whose name is synonymous with Highlife and the musician generally credited with foregrounding that popular genre, was tied to his day job as a pharmacist.

Other musicians, in Hall's words, 'treated music as a hobby' and, as a lifelong professional himself, he was unable to relate to the standards of discipline he encountered. Relaxing was one thing, but Hall was too much of a New Yorker to settle for the concept of 'African time' and the reluctance of players who held down a day job to rehearse or get to the gig on time.

His idea was to get a band going and some money coming in, then to open a studio and "start the young ones off on a jazz footing." He planned to teach clarinet and saxophone, an instrument for which he was not widely known but which he had played in the past. Now, especially in light of the tremendous reception Ghanaian audiences had given the All-Stars when they played there three years earlier, he was disappointed to find that there was a limited interest in jazz.

He was impressed by the drumming he heard: "In their style, what they were doing was wonderful," but Highlife ruled the roost with bands like Mensah's and Joe Kelly's at the top of the tree. And, although elements of jazz do exist in these bands, in both instrumentation and practice, the musicians tend to rely on repetition for effect rather than the all-out extemporisation of jazz.

Lack of housing was an additional problem for the Halls and left them unable to settle. In the end, what had seemed like a dream come true, could only go so far and after only three months, they decided to cut their losses. Their departure for the United States was a source of sadness and disappointment all round.

Above: Louis Armstrong's All-Stars arrive in Accra, Ghana, 1956 (Edmond Hall second from left, on clarinet)

> ***"Hall said he enjoyed Ghana's tendency to spring surprises, and did not rule out returning"***

Passing through London at the end of the year, the Halls spent Christmas at the Regent Palace Hotel. They renewed their acquaintance with the *Melody Maker*'s Max Jones, from whose interview some of these quotes are taken, and who gave me their phone number.

With a second Armstrong visit earlier that year still very much in mind, Jones took the visitors to the Six Bells in Chelsea for a jam-session featuring the Best of British. Listening to adventurous players such as trombonist John Mumford, saxophonists Bruce Turner and Dick Heckstall-Smith, and the home-grown rhythm team, Hall said, "If I could have got a rhythm section like that I'd have still been in Ghana."

I even spoke to the clarinettist myself. It was one of my first published interviews, conducted over the telephone, and went well, considering the circumstances. He told me about broadcasting with Highlife musicians, revealing the existence of some new compositions with an African theme, and hinted at the possibility of forthcoming recordings of this material in contrast to what he told Jones, he did not rule out returning to Ghana, especially given the way that the country had a tendency for springing surprises.

Just one example: At the end of November, he was in the studio, taking part in the show *Africa Guitar Club* at Broadcasting House in Accra, as a featured performer, when a Royal personage showed up at Broadcasting House. The Duke of Edinburgh, in Ghana, was visiting the newly-independent nation by himself and had found time to watch a popular radio programme being recorded. The late Prince Philip revealed a liking for jazz, and even requested a copy of the recording.

"Maybe it will be on the BBC," was Hall's languid comment. To which we may be forgiven for wondering whether this rare example might one day turn up in the archives at Buckingham Palace – surely due for a shake-up?

TURNING POINT

“It’s art that’s delivered directly. There’s no smoke and mirrors, yet it’s inherently so baffling – you can’t figure it out…”

Guitar *wunderkind* **Julian Lage** tells **Brian Glasser** how **Bill Evans** and **Jim Hall’s** understated masterpiece *Undercurrent* cemented his love affair with his instrument

My guitar teacher Randy Vincent showed this record to me when I was around nine or 10. My parents had a great record collection, but Jim Hall – and many of the other seminal records I heard, especially when I was getting into jazz – came from Randy.

I found the record incredibly approachable: deeply melodic, interactive, beautifully recorded, rich - extremely stimulating! It’s a cliché, but it’s still true: Jim possessed a very conversational quality as a player. Bill Evans did as well, but in a very different way – he’s very much on the front of the beat, pushing forwards like a train that can’t be stopped. Jim’s constantly interacting with that – it’s fascinating.

I think I’d heard Bill’s *Sunday at The Village Vanguard* record and maybe a compilation of his, but this record was pivotal because I was blindsided by it: it was, ‘What is this? Oh my god!’. Back then, I heard it more as a music fan than as a musician. It wasn’t, ‘I love this so I need to do it’ – it was more, ‘Cool, I need more of that’. I wasn’t ever a transcriber - I’ve never learned the music on the album, I’ve just loved it. So perhaps the accurate reflection of its effect was that when I heard it, I felt endeared to collective improvisation in a way that was huge. I thought, ‘Wow, if this is what’s possible, I want to keep learning.’

Partly through this – and Jim taught us the lesson time and time again – I came to appreciate the utilisation of guitar as a multidimensional tool. He was not just a guitar hero/lead player alone, or a rhythm player – on a given song, you hear counterpoint, you hear the rhythm, you hear him playing the melody, you hear improvising. It captures the ‘geo-prismatic’ attribute of the guitar that I think happens more often on record with classical guitar players like Segovia or Bream who are so complex.

Towards the end of Jim’s life, I was in a band with him, and Joey Baron and Scott Colley; so we were close. He really didn’t like talking about the past, and he didn’t romanticise it. The 1950s and 60s were a terrible time in America for so many reasons – systemic racism and oppression of all sorts – and he was out there with Sonny Rollins, Ella, all these people; and if you asked him about it, he’d remind you that they couldn’t go in the same entrance of a building. He didn’t ever say, ‘Yeah, but it was so swinging!’. So, strategically, I avoided talking to him about things from the past. Except I *did* ask him, and also Jane, his wife, about how he came to prepare for this record. It seems that they did a week or so at the Vanguard leading up to it, then went into the studio - that was it! It wasn’t ‘Here’s a new band’, they weren’t a touring act - which I think is interesting.

I’ve absolutely taken that on with my own records, albeit only more recently. I didn’t grow up that way – I used to romanticise other people’s records; and when it came to my own, it was just a complete stress of preparation! ‘What do I do? What’s the concept?’ and so on. I seem to play differently on records to how I do live - not by choice, just by circumstance, I think. But I’d say on the last couple of records, they’ve become sort of live records that just happen to get made in the studio. I think I’m coming to appreciate that some of my favourite recordings [by other people] have a certain mystery - you can’t pin down why you like them. So you can’t try to replicate anything when you make your own.

Now I delight in hearing back a recording that I’ve made and being able to say, ‘I really don’t know how we got to that!’ I think recording back in the day had a transactional nature – do it and move on. Part of that was that the record contracts were a three-records-a-year kind of deal, as I understand it. I don’t think there was much time for reflection; and you combine that with the fact that it was in an era that was, from Jim’s perspective, not very nostalgic - it was about moving forward. It’s us who have got a lot more nostalgic over time about that era!

What makes this album so great is that it’s art that’s delivered directly. There’s no smoke and mirrors, yet it’s inherently so baffling - you can’t ever figure it out.

Plus it’s only 27 minutes long - it’s just so to the point. The perfect record!

Bill Evans and Jim Hall
Undercurrent
United Artists (1962)
PERSONNEL: Jim Hall (g) and Bill Evans (p).
TRACKS: ‘My Funny Valentine’, ‘I Hear A Rhapsody’, ‘Dream Gypsy’, ‘Romain’, ‘Skating In Central Park’ and ‘Darn That Dream’.

Albums: New Releases

The UK's most definitive review section – Jazz and beyond

★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

JD Allen
Americana Vol 2

Savant SCD2202 (CD) ★★★★

J.D Allen (ts), Charlie Hunter (g), Gregg August (b) and Rudy Royston (d). Rec. January 2022

Since Detroit-born tenorist JD Allen's solo recording debut in 1999, this unobtrusively fine musician has figured in *DownBeat* Critics' Polls, led over a dozen albums, and worked as a sideman for artists from Meshell Ndegeocello and Nigel Kennedy to Dave Douglas. *Americana Vol 2* engagingly revisits the rootsy folk-derived agenda of its 2016 predecessor, with Allen's long-time trio partners on bass and drums, but now with exhilarating guitarist Charlie Hunter added on eight of its 11 tracks.

The saxophonist's economy of line, understated melodic twists, and nuanced solidity of tone make almost all of this music a compelling listen, and the band both complements him, and pulls and bends the grooves around him with canny provocativeness. On the traditional song 'This World is a Mean World', and the country standard 'You Don't Know Me', Allen's sound is rounded and heavy, with Hunter's guitar whirring and clanging against him on the former, and the tenor echoing the imperious command of a Sonny Rollins ballad delivery on the latter. Rudy Royston's arrhythmic drum patterns under Hunter's repeating guitar hook on 'Up South' are languidly dazzling; 'Hammer and Hoe' is a driving work-song that spurs Allen into mix of tone-bending wails and weaving double-time; 'The Battle of Blair Mountain' is a smoky tenor meditation over a pulsing groove; 'Down South' an earthily bluesy vehicle for Hunter and Allen in tandem.

JD Allen

Photo: Jazziz Babinsky

Americana Vol 2 celebrates both African-American organised-labour history and timeless musical values, but with a vividly contemporary take on both. **John Fordham**

Ron Carter
Finding The Right Notes

In+Out 77151 (CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Ron Carter (b) with Jimmy Greene (ts) Renee Rosnes, Ronald Vega, Jon Batiste (p), Russell Malone, Bill Frisell (g), Stanley Clarke (eb), Christian McBride (b), Payton Crossley (d) and WDR Big Band, Koln. Rec. 2017–2022

This is the soundtrack album to Peter Schnell's PBS documentary of the same name – first aired in October – about Ron Carter, that traces his story from Ferndale, Michigan, to the world's concert stages. But it's more than just a soundtrack – it's 10 complete performances that the TV documentary dips into. To all of us in the bass playing world, Ron is the guvnor. Not only the most-recorded bassist in history, but still – at 85 – a man who consistently shows what it is possible for this lowly instrument to do. The centre of the album is the up-to-the-minute work by the current quartet with which Ron toured the world this summer, featuring Jimmy Greene, Renee Rosnes and Payton Crossley.

Their beautifully balanced 'Flamenco Sketches' shows just how Ron has moved from a consummate sideman to a bassist who dictates the pace and atmosphere of his own band. (The limited edition double LP has an additional bonus track by this line-up).

But his range and openness are on show here too. He digs back in history with 'Sweet Lorraine', a duo with pianist Jon Batiste, shares the stage with other bassists Stanley Clarke, and then Christian McBride (in an exploratory reading of 'Willow Weep For Me') and, with Bill Frisell, he plays a sensitive duo on 'My Man's Gone Now', reminding me of the weekly sessions I used to attend in 1980s Manhattan where Ron and Jim Hall took ballads apart during their creative jousting.

But just to prove he's as at home in a large ensemble as in these nuanced chamber jazz settings, he joins the WDR big band for a trio of pieces. Of these, the lively 'Receipt Please' is the highlight, his positive and thoughtful basslines constantly propelling the rhythm section to support some fine solos and ensemble playing, as well as giving him solo space for his own inventive melodic ideas and fine chordal double stopping. A total delight by the world's most consummate jazz bassist. **Alyn Shipton**

Wolfert Brederode/ Matangi Quartet/ Joost Lijbaart
Ruins and Remains

ECM 2734 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Wolfert Brederode (p), Matangi Quartet: Maria-Paula Majoor (vn), Daniel Torrico Menacho (vn) Karsten Kleijer (vla) Arno Van der Vuurst (clo) and Joost Lijbaart (d, perc). Rec. August 2021

The young Dutch pianist Wolfert Brederode wrote his *Ruins and Remains* suite in 2018 to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. With compositions/arrangements written for piano, percussion and string quartet, Brederode looks to mirror the sense of loss, grief and resilience of the times.

Although he has previously recorded three times for ECM with his jazz quartet/trio and is a regular accompanist for Swiss folk-jazz vocalist Susanne Abbuehl, *Ruins and Remains* is further to the chamber minimalist rather than jazz end of the Munich label's remit. Yet there are occasional echoes of Bill Frisell's folky strings-laden Americana-influenced recordings and Brederode's patient less-is-more piano and his compatriot string

group Matangi Quartet's exquisite folky lines, seem to organically grow from within the lightly rippling textures.

Devices such as string overtones and drones are delicately utilised alongside Brederode's long-term collaborator Joost Lijbaart's percussive effects along with the largely hushed dynamics which are enhanced by the favourable acoustics of the Sendesaal, a concert hall in Bremen where the album was recorded. Capturing all the finest sonic nuances of the set is something we've come to expect from an ECM recording. The melancholic, serene drift of large parts of *Ruins and Remains* might be anodyne to some jazz ears, but the haunting themes and well-crafted arrangements shouldn't go unnoticed.

Selwyn Harris

Alex Clarke Quartet
Only A Year

Stray Horn SHR001 (CD) ★★★

Alex Clarke (as, ts), David Newton (p), Dave Green (b) and Clark Tracey (d).
Rec. 4 May 2022

Clarke is only in her early 20s, but is already a player of consequence. Having dropped out of music college after a year, she has taken a more traditional route: that of getting stuck in to the business of learning her craft and working. Her date sheet is impressive as is her willingness to travel. She has also along the way attracted the attention and the support of Newton, Green and Tracey, not only for this album but also at the recent Swanage jazz festival. They rate her, I know.

She is articulate on both her horns, with the edge in fluency on the alto, this betraying something of Phil Woods' approach in both sound and execution and all the better for it. This is first manifest on 'Brazilian Affair', incidentally, a piece by Woods, and is continued, most decisively, by her very fleet reading of 'It's You Or No One', with Newton at his incisive best.

Her tenor is chunkier, nearer the broad mainstream in tone and style. The duo version of Strayhorn's 'Ballad For Very Tired And Very Sad Lotus Eaters' with Newton, is reverential, Clarke allowing her tenor tone to billow and ebb in pursuit of the melody, Newton impeccable in support. Garner's 'Shake It But Don't Break It' is more robust, as is her own 'Beetroots Burn', this edging into r&b, the tenor quite gutsy, Tracey pushing hard. Clarke is a rising star according to the British Jazz Awards and here's the evidence. As Scott Hamilton says, "She sounds comfortable and inspired". And he's right.

Peter Vacher

Theo Croker Quartet with Mitglieder der Berliner Philharmoniker
Jazz at Berlin Philharmonic XII: Sketches of Miles

ACT Music 9948-2 (2 CD, DL) ★★★★

Theo Croker (t), Danny Grissett (p), Joshua Ginsburg (b), Gregory Hutchinson (d) with Magnus Lindgren (ts) and the Berlin Philharmoniker. Rec. 27 November 2021

Sketches of Miles is exactly that. Loving recreations of the sacred cows of the Miles Davis canon – including 'Pinocchio/Milestones,' 'Footprints,' 'My Funny Valentine' and 'So What' by Theo Croker's quartet on the first disc, and 'Miles Ahead Suite,' 'Sketches of Spain Suite,' 'Porgy and Bess Suite' and 'All Blues' with Croker's quartet and the Mitglieder der Berliner Philharmoniker on the second CD, all lovingly recreated with a mixture of respect, affection and awe. Croker steps inside his role of Miles-Davis-for-a-night, his tone and the outline of his improvisations remaining idiomatically faithful to the material at hand, while his quartet give every indiction they too have really got inside these compositions.

There is no question this would have been a wonderful concert to witness, especially the performances captured on compact disc two, with the Mitglieder der Berliner Philharmoniker and the Croker quartet playing reimagined arrangements of Davis' *Miles Ahead* by Magnus Lindgren, *Sketches of Spain* by Hans Eck (who wrote the EST Symphony), and Lindgren's *Porgy & Bess*. 'All Blues' is a head arrangement put together by Lindgren. Live, jazz repertory is one thing, being witness to what Miles Davis might have sounded like live almost 70 years ago can be both exciting and stimulating, but on record it stands in competition with the real thing, the original recordings, where there is only one winner.

Yet such nostalgic endeavours, when well produced and performed, like (*Sketches of Spain*) can have great appeal to those unfamiliar or resistant to the ever-changing present in jazz, or those who yearn for the imagined "normalcy" of a jazz past that seemed far more secure.

Stuart Nicholson

Corrie Dick
Sun Swells

Ubuntu UBU0108 (LP, CD, DL) ★★★

Corrie Dick (d, perc, comp), Marianna Sangita, Dave Malkin (v, lyrics), Alice Zawadzki (v), Laura Jurd (t), Joe Wright (s), Rob Luft (g), Tom Moore (vla), Joe Webb (org), Matt Robinson (p, syn), and Tom McCredie (b). Rec. date not stated

Corrie Dick wears his prodigious rhythmic education lightly, having studied with Ghanaian master Sadiq Addy alongside mind-blowing times in Morocco, prior to driving Dinosaur's electric Milesian grooves. Where his solo debut *Impossible Things* (2015) had a spiritual, airy quality, *Sun Swells* attempts jazz with rock power trio instrumentation at its core, and singer-lyricist contributions from Marianna Sangita and Dave Malkin, the latter's rich, woody tone redolent of early 1970s UK folk-rock.

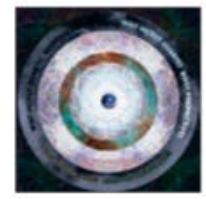
Opener 'Warehouse' brims with compositional ambition, from its initial staccato piano and cymbals through ska and dub phases, rooted by Dick's bass-drum's thudding, shifting pulse as Malkin sings of an ecologically burning world. 'Fingers Full of Meaning' has the hardest rock crunch, but is as notable for Tom McCredie's bubbling post-punk and Afro-funk bass. Laura Jurd's trumpet draws a fine, mournful thread through 'Sinking', as Sangita sings the first of several affirmations of female lives.

Malkin similarly serves the wounded male protagonist of 'Everything the Light Touches' with a stately balladeer's croon, then conjures the Hebridean vistas of 'We Were Green', returning in spirit to Impossible Things. "You're a Scotch mist that envelops and smothers/ and you're the burning sun from which it runs," he sighs, as vocal harmonies, brass and steel guitar assume the mist's qualities. Dick's castanet-like clicks introduce Alice Zawadzki's warmly conversational vocal on 'She Speaks More', while 'Golden Flowers' is a courtly, Celtic waltz over pensive classical piano. 'The River' closes with a calypso lilt, featherlight dub and Joe Webb's gorgeous, rousing organ solo. The variety is held together by the songwriting, and the individual strengths of Dick's exceptional band. **Nick Hasted**

Whit Dickey Quartet
Root Perspectives

Tao Forms TAO 12 (CD, DL) ★★★

Whit Dickey (d), Tony Malaby (ts), Matthew Shipp (p) and Brandon Lopez (b).
Rec. 7 May 2022



Remember those times when pianist Matthew Shipp announced he was retiring from recording? Fortunately he's as adept at the U-turn as a Tory government, and still involved in serious, emotionally rich dates like this one.

Shipp's huge-hearted yet cerebral lyricism is all over the four long improvisations on drummer Whit Dickey's latest missive from his own label. Tenor man Tony Malaby gives it everything he's got, audibly straining at the horn's limits, even reaching beyond the limits of musicality: there's an astonishing tragi-comic moment in the opening piece, 'Supernova,' in which he finds himself at a terminal point where all that's left to do is issue raw, blunt blasts. It works, too. Dickey, for his part, largely eschews any obvious free-jazz burning, offering sensitive, often quiet commentary, with softly tumbling toms invoking more than a little of the presence of his mentor Milford Graves, and the punctuating clash of hi-hats nodding towards the spirit of Sunny Murray.

In fact, this avoidance of the familiar – on everyone's part – is what makes the date so interesting. You'd be hard pushed even to call this jazz. Wildly imaginative, sometimes almost unbearably melodramatic, this is spontaneous composition operating at a very high level indeed. **Daniel Spicer**

Jakob Dinesen Quartet
Unconditional Love

Stunt STUCD 22052 (CD, DL) ★★★

Jakob Dinesen (ts), Jacob Artved (g), Felix Moseholm (b) and Jeff 'Tain' Watts (d). Rec. 4-5 December 2021

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this album's initial track, 'Say', opens with a minor roundelay from Watts, its guest star. After all, it is in his home studio in Pennsylvania that this music was made, the two Danes, Dinesen and Artved having travelled from Europe to be there, picking up the New York-based bassist Moseholm, another Dane, along the way. Then it is into tempo, the highly experienced Dinesen sharing the solo space with the gifted guitarist Artved, Watts restrained initially.

It is easy to sense the influence of Stan Getz in Dinesen's quite beautiful tenor sound and reflective fluency on most of these numbers, none of them hurried or over-cooked. This is especially apparent on the elegiac title track, composed by the late pianist Geri Allen, and yet again on the leader's own 'Jaden's Jam' and 'Here Comes Marvin', the improvisations often sinuous and detailed, with Watts cleverly varying his percussive inputs.

Artved is more straight-ahead in his solos even if the atmosphere to which he contributes stays on the cooler side of hot. There's beauty here and no sign of the beast, for this is restrained, often elegant music, replete with quiet mastery, this never more evident than on the quartet's reading of Ellington's 'Melancholia', Dinesen's high register, immaculate concept fading into the ether, Watts puttering along.

It took the final track,'Tyk Onsdaag' (don't ask) to liven things up, Dinesen more assertive and Watts creating rhythmic mayhem. More of this would have earned another star.

Peter Vacher

Dezron Douglas

Dezron Douglas
Atalaya

International Anthem IARC0058 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Dezron Douglas (b), George Burton (p, el p), Emilio Modeste (s), Joe Dyson Jr (d) and Melvis Santa (v, perc). Rec. 25, 26 August, 21 November 2021

A protége of Jackie McLean, a *DownBeat* magazine 2019 Rising Star and a performer with Pharoah Sanders, Ravi Coltrane, Cyrus Chestnut, David Murray, Louis Hayes, Mulgrew Miller and Benny Green, bassist/composer Dezron Douglas has a heavy reputation to match his heavy tone. That tone is front and centre on this album of high-octane contemporary quartet jazz, driving the time-shifting swing on 'Coyoacán', anchoring the 13/8 figure on the title track, bursting out of the speakers to introduce the portentous modal workout of 'Luna Moth'.

Emilio Modeste by contrast is a more light-toned, oblique presence on tenor and soprano, sounding a bit like Charles Lloyd on the free-time ballad 'Jones Beach', and his grainy, rhythmically off-kilter approach contrasts thrillingly with the muscular bass and drums on 'More Coffee Please'. George Burton adds a similarly distinctive voice, his impressive chops moderated by his powerful, sometimes eccentric imagination. Bass guitar and vocals provide a potent interlude on 'Wheeping Birch' but the rest of the album is pure live acoustic improvisation, driven by Joe Dyson Jnr's assertive drumming and Dezron's' massive bass that prioritises sound and ideas over speedy ostentation.

Across the whole album, he and his crew present an unapologetically no-holds-barred vision of modern jazz that's entirely contemporary but not in thrall to any current passing fashions. 'J-Bird' sounds like an updated version of Sam Rivers' band circa 1965 with added muscle from a ferocious Dyson and everyone burning in best freebop style, all delivered with a laconic urgency – most tracks come in under four minutes. They're a tight empathetic unit, able to shift from consonance to dissonance and from free time to funk to ferocious swing without breaking step.

Some listeners might be disappointed by a relative dearth of singable melody but the band's sheer energy and conviction, not to mention their incontrovertible hipness, should go a long way to winning them over. **Eddie Myer**

Hilario Durán/ David Virelles
Front Street Duets

Alma 10132 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Hilario Durán and David Virelles (p). Rec. November 2021

The use of the piano in Cuban music goes back a long way, paralleling its use in jazz. And the cross-influence between the two, from at least Jelly Roll Morton and Bebo Valdés (the father of Chucho), is not only considerable but, as far as I know, not much explored in print. Durán is something of an elder statesman and, now approaching his 70th birthday (an exact date seems unpublished) and therefore a decade younger than Chucho, has been based in Toronto since 1998.

By contrast, Virelles is pushing 40 and, after studying in Toronto thanks to Jane Bunnett, was drawn to people like Steve Coleman and Henry Threadgill and, moving to New York, has made several appearances on ECM. What transpires from their two days in the studio (after previously working together online during the pandemic) is a fascinating and joyous collaboration that's unsurprisingly melodic and, of course, abundantly rhythmic.

Much of the material is composed by Durán especially for this project, but there are also flamboyant arrangements of Cuban and North American standards such as Lecuona's 'Danza Lucumi' and even 'Body And Soul'. Enjoy. **Brian Priestley**

Ezra Collective
Where I'm Meant To Be

Partisan Records PTKF3020-8 (CD, 2 LP, DL, cassette) ★★★★

Joe Armon-Jones (p), Ife Ogunjobi (t), James Mollison (ts), TJ Koleoso (b) and Femi Koleoso (d). Rec. date not stated

The Londoners continue to shirk labels as they tunnel further into acoustic dance music on their second album. Having ridden out the 'UK jazz explosion' headlines, Ezra Collective's stock is still rising among the more mainstream music community, as the starry guestlist on *Where I'm Meant To Be* confirms.

Zambian rapper Sampa the Great guests on big-hitting single 'Life Goes On', NAO and Emeli Sandé both drop by for interesting vocal cuts, and Tony Allen's declaration 'I'm playing jazz my way' (that introduces Kojey Radical feature 'No Confusion') neatly sums up the thought-process underpinning Ezra Collective's 10-year existence to date.

It's a mature statement from the group, with careful attention paid to energy levels on their ride through Afrobeats, funk, dub, and some really fun up-tempo Afro-Cuban tracks. They've not completely abandoned improvising either, with plenty of space for Joe Armon-Jones' choppy piano soloing and Ife Ogunjobi's frantic blowing, with music broken up by snippets of advice from Allen and Steve McQueen. At the Collective's heart is hugely impressive bandleader Femi Koleoso, who switched his usual gig with Jorja Smith to drum with Gorillaz, as you do. 'Never The Same Again' is the crossroads where all directions intersect, as the group's strong, distinct voice continues to grow.

Hugh Morris

Richard Galliano New York Tango Trio
Cully 2022

TCB The Montreux Jazz Label
TCB02472 (CD) ★★★★

Richard Galliano (acc), Sébastien Giniaux (g, clo) and Diego Imbert (b). Rec. 6 April 2022

There is no gainsaying the status of Galliano as the premier accordionist of his generation. That is, in jazz terms, for he has amassed a formidable discography in collaboration with substantial jazz figures, of both US and European origin. This is not that kind of occasion. Appearing here at the 39th Cully Jazz Festival – it's in Switzerland, overlooking Lake Geneva, should you wish to know – before a rapt and hugely enthusiastic audience, Galliano offers a virtuosic programme of his own pieces, plus those of his late hero Astor Piazzolla and others by composers as varied as Eric Satie and Serge Gainsbourg.

He says the concert is a reminder of his trip to New York when he recorded with Al Foster and company.

Galliano's command of his instrument's capacity for emotional portrayal, danceable rhythm and distinctive dynamic variation is undoubted and clear throughout this beautifully recorded recital (part of the *Swiss Radio Days* series). If there is what we might recognise as jazz improvisation, it is masked within his commitment to the New Tango concept as well as to Jazz Musette. Each is apparent here, and given the latter's emphasis, it's no surprise that Giniaux's occasional guitar solos are Django-esque. There is no swing here, rather music of compelling beauty, a piece like Piazzola's 'Chiquelin De Bachin' enhanced by Imbert's superb arco bass, Giniaux's cello and their sweeping, combined 'orchestral' backdrop. There is variety here, and consummate mastery, too, wrapped in an elegant fusion of tango, classical, and musette, And some jazz? Yes, for the already convinced and those seeking insight into Galliano's unique musical sensibility. **Peter Vacher**

Sean Gibbs
Confluence

Ubuntu Music UBU0124 (CD, DL) ★★★

Sean Gibbs, Tom Walsh, James Davison, Freddie Gavita (t), James Copus (t, flug), Tom Dunnett, Kieran McLeod, Richard Foote (tr), Richard Henry (btr), Helena Kay, Riley Stone-Lonergan (ts), George Millard (as, ss), James Gardiner-Bateman (as), Chris Maddock (bs), Rob Brockway (p), Calum Gourlay (b) and Jay Davis (d). Rec. 19 May 2022

Edinburgh-born, London-based trumpeter Sean Gibbs drew some glowing reviews when he released his debut quintet album, *When Can I See You Again?*, in 2021.

An established member of the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, he is a keen composer of big band music, and *Confluence* – released on the enterprising independent Ubuntu Music, like that quintet album – is his opening foray in the field as a writer and band leader.

"The title [*Confluence*] refers to different aspects of my musical and personal life, which seemed to come together at the right time to make it happen," Gibbs explains. "It also represents the joyous gathering of so many incredible musicians and friends."

And indeed the 17-piece recording band join together to bring six Gibbs compositions to stirring, vigorous life. 'Lyrical melodies, hearty grooves and a deep connection to the blues' are Gibbs' watchwords, and he honours those stated values throughout, from the urbane opener 'Lewis', through the sweet-toned ballad 'Tomorrow Will Come', to the warmly burnished comedown closer 'Hungover Moments Of Clarity', which features some spectacular blowing from all concerned.

A fine follow-up statement of intent from a rising talent.

Robert Shore

Connie Han
Secrets Of Inanna

Mack Avenue MAC1193 (CD) ★★★

Connie Han (p, el-p), John Patitucci (b), Bill Wysaske (d) plus Rich Perry (ts, four tracks), Katisse Buckingham (picc, af, two tracks). Rec. 22-23 November 2021

Born in the US to Chinese parents, Han is 26 and already has three previous albums to her name. The hook to this one is, you will have guessed, that her inspiration is drawn from the Sumerian epic poetry of ancient Mesopotamia, specifically about Inanna (the queen of Heaven and Earth), her sister Ereshkigal (dark queen of the Underworld) and her unsuccessful pursuit of Gilgamesh. (You can't receive a press release about such matters without quoting from it).

But the melodious originals are less pretentious than you might expect, and the occasional hints of fusion suggested by a bit of electric keyboard are belied by a straight-ahead feel elsewhere. All the material is credited to Han or drummer/co-producer Wysaske, except for 'Morning Star' (the Rodgers Grant piece previously recorded by Hubert Laws) and 'Desert Air' (originally a duet by composer Chick Corea and Gary Burton).

The use of bassist Patitucci on most of the tracks and the appearances of tenor Rich Perry (veteran of the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra) lend a welcome gravitas to the proceedings.

Brian Priestley

Ezra Collective

Jasper Høiby's Planet B

What it Means to be Human

Edition EDN1200 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Jasper Høiby (b, elec), Josh Arcoleo (s) and Marc Michel (d). Rec. date not stated

Even before the much-loved London-based piano trio Phronesis called it a day in 2020, the band's effervescent now London-based bassist-leader Jasper Høiby, was on a mission to spread awareness of the importance of action on climate change and planet sustainability directly through his music. His plans came more sharply into focus on new trio Planet B's eponymously titled 2020 release, the first instalment in a four-part project of which this one, *What it Means to be Human,* is the second. As with Phronesis, Høiby favours an energetic, tightly-knit acoustic trio dialogue and his bass is an imposing one, favouring a full-blooded, sonorous pizzicato and sensuously propulsive grooves.

Alongside Høiby are French drummer Marc Michel and the British tenor saxophonist Josh Arcoleo, who made a very promising debut himself on the Edition label in 2012; here he effectively maintains an inventive, purposeful narrative. His occasionally Rollins-ish sax in bustling counterpoint with Høiby's bass is a highlight. The album's dark edgy, sonicworld resonates well with Høiby's eco-warning which is reinforced with a tasteful scattering of audio samples as spoken by various female authors/cultural commentators including Grace Lee Boggs, Ruby Sales and Jane Goodall. They seem to work as passing commentary, attaching thought and meaning to the music without hammering you over the head with it and Høiby's ethereal arco plays a key role in this communication.

Worthy political or humanitarian agendas rarely translate well to jazz in practice, but Høiby's passion is laid bare in his music here. **Selwyn Harris**

Helena Kay's Kim Trio

Golden Sands

Sulis Records SUL001 (CD, DL) ★★★

Helena Kay (ts, comp), Peter Johnstone (p), Calum Gourlay (b) and David Ingamells (d). Rec. 25 April 2022

Helena Kay emerged from Guildhall garlanded with awards and her 2018 debut album *Moon Palace* showcased a remarkably confident player and composer who was happy to eschew the contemporary London trends to set their own course: less flamboyant, more closely linked to the tradition, with a poise and clear, direct melodicism that belied the underlying complexity of their carefully wrought compositions. That careful, considered approach is evident in the five-year gap between the debut and this equally poised follow up. Kay is a self-avowed Rollins fan and you can hear it in their big warm tone and clean, uncluttered style: opening track 'Amor y Amargo' has an easy swinging melodicism that makes it sound like a rediscovered nugget from the Golden Era, with additional echoes of Getz's sounds from the 1960s.

Helena Kay

Previous collaborators Calum Gourlay and David Ingamells return, as well they might since their own carefully deployed virtuosity, rooted in the history of the music but thoroughly alive to modern developments. is a perfect match for Kay's own approach. Peter Johnstone expands the trio to make the harmonic statements overt and add deft solos and unobtrusive comping and he's an equally sympathetic addition. Together they explore Kay's compositions that take us on a trip showcasing their influences: taking the opener as a starting point we are politely invited to consider in turn a well-scrubbed Tristano-esque take on drum 'n' bass, a beautiful ballad with hints of 'Naima' in the theme, a tribute to Carla Bley in pastoral free-time euro-jazz and a nod to Kay's Scottish roots. 'Tuesday Club' has a exciting drum and sax duet and a sprightly NYC-flavoured theme that stands out. This is a subtly enchanting record from a quietly outstanding musician that repays repeated listening. **Eddie Myer**

Laura Jurd

The Big Friendly Album

Big Friendly Records BF001 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Laura Jurd (t, ct, p), Martin Lee Thomson (euph), Danielle Price (tab), Alex Haines (g), Ruth Goller (b), Corrie Dick (d) with Mark Lockheart (ss), Finn Peters (f), Frode Haltli (acc), Dylan Bates and Mandhira de Saram (vn). Rec. August 2021

Writing happy music isn't that novel, but it's a darn sight harder than it looks. Jurd's fourth solo outing, *The Big Friendly Album* is just that, in that it is rich with joyous melody, feel good rhythms that often grow from New Orleans street stylings and a dash of (primarily Scottish) folk traditions. That brass front line is partly influenced by Lester Bowie and his feel for mixing jazz with popular song, but there are also echoes of when Mike and Kate Westbrook took their brass band to the streets, while Django Bates' and Loose Tubes' sense of communal spontaneity is much to the fore. Indeed, Mark Lockheart brings a singing soprano to 'Houseplant', a nod to his band Perfect Houseplants, who were so influential on the young Jurd.

The 'guests' are a potent ingredient, never 'just' decoration. Finn's flute lifts the Django-esque 'Fuzzy' while Haltli's accordion brings a nordic noir to 'Passing Clouds' and an edge to the mildly psychotic sense of 'Sleepless'. Jurd keeps her cornet playing controlled, no showboating here, although she turns to trumpet for a bravura flourish on 'Here the Tale Ends'.

Overall, *The Big Friendly Album* wears its artfulness lightly, but there's a sense of detail, a deft handling of time changes and harmonic weavings that may not get noticed beneath the sweeping arc of its tunefulness. It's big, it's friendly but it's also fabulously constructed. Buy and be friendly. **Andy Robson**

Let Spin

Thick As Thieves

Efpi Records FP043 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Moss Freed (g, bari g), Chris Williams (as), Ruth Goller (el b) and Finlay Panter (d). Rec. date not stated

It's impressive that, after 10 years as a project, Let Spin are still finding fresh ways to develop their ideas without losing the band's distinctive identity. *Thick As Thieves* is practically a concept album, inasmuch as the 10 tracks segue through without a break and musical motifs and ideas slip in and out of focus across its flow.

There's a fairly constant tempo but distinct mood shifts – sometimes dramatic, other times more nuanced – which give the individual 'tracks' their character. As with their three previous albums, compositional credits are spread across the four musicians but with more fluidity, and the overall sense is of them working to a collective understanding of how the band should sound through improvisation. This can mean simple four or five note phrases

tossed between instruments (as in the high energy track 'Mixed Messages') or long and complex melodic lines coalescing from two voices in the scattershot 'Broken', 'I Told You' or the more spaciously ambient 'North Sea Swim'.

Naturally there are moments of prog heaviness – 'Mixed Messages' boils down over a frenetic bass riff, 'Bead' builds from the chattering Morse Code bass of the previous track into an epic theme that dissipates into 'Liminality', the tight and assertive final track. Listening straight through the album feels like a journey across a post-rock landscape full of comfortable surprises, with 'Liminality''s resolute Ayler-ish coda marking an inevitable and satisfying destination. **Tony Benjamin**

Aaron Liddard
Nylon Man

Havis House (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Aaron Liddard (t, f, p), ft Giulia Marelli, Carleen Anderson, Sannaliisa Ilkka, Sam Grimley, Miss Baby Sol, Segun Lee French, Joan Viskant (v), Harry Greene (g), Paul Michael, Felipe Cortes (b), Jimmy Norden, Marc Parnell (d), Norman Jankowski (pandeiro), Eric Young (perc), Yelfris Valdes, Sid Gauld, Paul Jordanous (t), Omar Puente (vn) and others. Rec. date not stated

"Jazz is the only living musical art-form that is not defined by its exclusions," says saxophonist-keyboardist-composer-arranger Aaron Liddard. "At its truest, jazz is an evolving aural tradition. As a musician with myriad musical influences, jazz is the only home that allows me to fully explore."

No exclusions, myriad, fully explore – all good terms to sum up the spirit of this 12-track release featuring 42 musicians and the sounds of the musical world stretching from the UK to Africa, the USA and the Caribbean – the album title, *Nylon Man*, which celebrates three key influences (New York, London and Manchester) doesn't quite capture its range as it journeys restlessly around the globe. Recorded in Brazil, 'Chicken Soup' has Liddard on both piano and tenor, and some great bass work from Felipe Cortes. 'Catfood' bursts with uncontainable energy and features both British funk and Cuban rhythm sections. 'My Kinda' begins with a great gust of bombastic rock thrash in the manner of '21st Century Schizoid Man' before nodding towards hip-hop, highlife and more. **Robert Shore**

Marilyn Mazur's Shamania
Rerooting

Clap Your Hands CYH004 (CD, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Marilyn Mazur (comp, perc, bale, kalimba), Josefine Cronholm (v), Sissel Vera Petterson (v, as), Hildegunn Øiseth (t, goat horn) Lotte Anker (ts, ss) Lis Wessberg (tb), Makiko Hirabayashi (tr), Ida Gormsen (b), Lisbeth Diers (perc) and Anna Lund (d). Rec. January 2022

Leave it to Marilyn Mazur to take us back to our roots: to Gaia. Mother Earth. Our Selves. Brimming with creativity, strafed with witchy magic and life-affirming verve, this fabulous recording returns the veteran Danish percussionist/composer to her career origins, pre-Miles, way before Jan Garbarek.

From 1978 to 1986 Mazur and her Primi Band, an all-female theatre ensemble, channelled a primal, anything goes energy; Mazur's 10-strong Scandi outfit Shamania take up the baton here. Released on Clap Your Hands, a label with a remit to explore the creative process, *Rerooting* is powerful, emboldened by its right to fail. A focus on rhythm, body and voice heightens the shamanic vibe; lauded jazz singers Josefine Cronholm and Sissel Vera Petterson are clarion-like on 'The Birds Are Early Out', a divine swirl of timbres and nuances, vast horizons and inky depths – and a highlight among 16 compositions of varying vintage. 'Coloured Minds' is both delicate (Mazur's kalimba) and robust (Hirabayashi's prepared piano); 'Shamamalibas' is a lively exchange between goathorn, percussion, congas and soprano sax.

Mazur closes with the solo 'Gongs for Peace', a treat for fans and a plea for the planet. Awesome stuff. **Jane Cornwell**

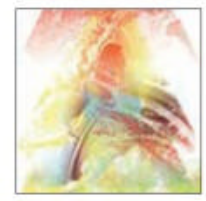
Photo: Goatnoise Photography

Aaron Liddard

Matters Unknown
We Aren't Just

New Soil/Bandcamp (2 LP, DL) ★★★

Jonny Enser (t, tba, ky, syn), Nick Richards (v, as), Lyle Barton (p, syn), Rosie Turton (tb), Viva Msimang (tb), Alec Hewes (b), Matt Davies (d), Tom Excell (perc) Jansen Santana (perc), Mohamed Gueye (perc) and Olivia Bhattacharjee (v). Rec. date not stated



Multi-instrumentalist Jonny Enser (aka Matters Unknown) is best known for contributing to afro-funk group Nubiyan Twist's trademark, horn-heavy sound. *We Aren't Just*, his expansive debut solo record, follows a similar conceptual path to Kokoroko's *Could We Be More* or Melt Yourself Down's *Pray For Me I Don't Fit In*: each outlines an empathetic musical philosophy based on eroding the lines between genres (markers growing less clear with every day) and relating that back to ideas of cultural identity. Nubiyan Twist is clearly a jumping-off point, as Enser brings together a large cast of UK talent drawn from bands like Noya Rao, Collectiva and Nérija.

Across 14 tracks, you get a clear indication of Enser's influences: West Coast groove, London's stylistic melting pot, and time spent in New Orleans around the nascent brass band scene. At times, soloists might benefit from something a bit juicier than the single or dual chord underlay to contribute something fresh to the conversation, but elsewhere, standing in a single place really works. Sabar player Mohamed Gueye is a stand-out guest on afrobeat track 'Blind Spot', and there's a celebration of the blues on midway point 'Bump'. **Hugh Morris**

Maria Mendes
Saudade, Colour of Love

Challenge Records CR 73552 (CD, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Maria Mendes (v, a), John Beasley (cond, a, kys), Cédric Hanriot (p, ky), Jasper Somsen (b), Mário Costa (d, perc) plus the Metropole Orkest. Rec. 11-12 May 2022

A love letter both to *fado* and to jazz, and the boundless possibilities that come from marrying the two, *Saudade, Colour of Love* represents a stunning achievement. Recorded in the Netherlands at Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ Amsterdam and at Parkstad Limburg Theaters Heerlen over two nights in May this year, the remarkable live recording from the Portuguese-born, Netherlands-based vocalist and composer, Maria Mendes – in the company of her own quartet plus the Metropole Orkest conducted by keyboardist, composer, and arranger John Beasley – includes striking orchestral arrangements of material from her 2019 Grammy-nominated album, *Close To Me*.

Composed by Alain Oulman and Luís Vaz de Camões, and described by Mendes as being one of her ultimate *fados*, 'Com Que Voz' is the perfect scene-setter, with a richly detailed arrangement, Mendes's soaring vocal and the music's harmonic twists and turns combining to powerful effect. Written by the virtuoso Portuguese guitar player and composer, Carlos Paredes, 'Verdes Anos' elicits an extraordinarily committed and impassioned performance from both vocalist and orchestra. Penned by legendary Brazilian composer Hermeto Pascoal – and presented to Mendes in the form of a handwritten score on the back of a hotel room emergency exit instruction card – the melodic beauty and uplifting rhythmic charge of 'Hermeto's Fado For Maria' is an ecstatic standout. Newly composed by Mendes and Beasley, and seamlessly channelling the overall tenor of the album, 'Meu Pobre Capitão' draws proceedings to a heart-warming close. **Peter Quinn**

Marius Neset
Happy

ACT Music 90542/1 (CD, LP, DL) ★★

Marius Neset (ts, ss), Elliot Galvin (ky), Magnus Hjorth (p), Conor Chapin (b) and Anton Eger (d, perc). Rec. date not stated

It's a difficult thing to find an esteemed artist in a happy place; not because listeners really want artists to suffer for their art, but because finding the silver linings in sadness makes for a more rewarding listen than dredging up melancholy while surrounded by pleasantness. *Happy* follows a long period of composition commissions for Neset: 'Viaduct', 'Snowmelt' and 'Geyser' for London Sinfonietta, a saxophone concerto 'MANMADE' for the Bergen Philharmonic, plus a handful of concertos and chamber pieces elsewhere. Fans might have wanted a fresh take on the hyper-rhythmic, broadly tonal explosions of frenetic energy they've become accustomed to. This is certainly something different – but is it something new?

Happy may yet mark the start of an 'electric Neset' period, with Elliot Galvin's fuzzy keyboards taking centre stage, and electronically manipulated textures slotting into Neset's steadfastly acoustic soundworld for the first time. But the directions the album moves in – pop, 1980s funk, moody, minimal tunes in an uneven metre – have all been done before, and it's difficult to hear *Happy* as anything other than a highly accomplished musician falling back on the past, rather than finding genuinely interesting new avenues to explore. *Happy* is a slick affair, with a handful of thought-provoking moments (found in the second half, on 'Islands' and 'Diamonds') and the playing is generally fabulous – especially Neset's own virtuosic flourishes – but it all comes too easily, and ends up sounding rather empty. **Hugh Morris**

Robert Mitchell True Think
Hold The Light/The New Resistance

Depth Of Field DOF004 (2 CD) ★★★

Robert Mitchell (p, ky), Tom Mason (b), Xan Blacq, Deborah Jordan, Omar, Carleen Anderson, Laura Perrudin, Alice Zawadzki, Becca Stevens, Lislotte Ostblom (v), Gillian and Gordon Wedderburn, Alice Mitchell (spoken word), Yelfris Valdes (t), Michael Olatuja (b) and Saleem Raman (d). Rec. 2021

There has always been a strong socially-conscious element in the music of Robert Mitchell and on this multi-layered, ambitious double CD, the talented British pianist-composer makes one of his most explicit statements to date on the state of the world and the pressing need for change. Every track asks questions of the direction of travel of humankind, and given the ongoing refugee crisis (long before the war in Ukraine) as well as conspicuous global inequality and the rise of the right in Europe, any music that engages with real life as fully as Mitchell's is welcome. Since the early 2000s debut of his first band Panacea, he has been organically eclectic, knitting together many elements of black music with real verve, and here his patchwork wraps largely over the low register density beloved of hip-hop, with a punchy, weighty kick and bulging bass to the fore.

While straying into 'boom bap' territory, Mitchell retains the harmonic sophistication inherent to his faultless command of jazz and classical music, and the resulting blend is excellent. That said, the frequent use of spoken word interludes is problematic as some are too long and don't significantly enhance the lyrical content elsewhere. But this predominantly vocal-led album is deeply soulful and hits a dizzying creative height when the peerless Carleen Anderson appears, along with Cuban trumpeter Yelfris Valdes, on 'Better Time, Better Place', a quite astounding track whose subtle march rhythm ingeniously morphs into the kind of dramatic but nonetheless tightly controlled techno-operetta that Stacey Pullen does so well. Had the song been moved up the running order so as to make it the centerpiece of the set, with a few tracks being trimmed, Mitchell might have had a masterpiece on his hands. As it is, he has made another notable entry in his impressive discography.

Kevin Le Gendre

Robert Mitchell

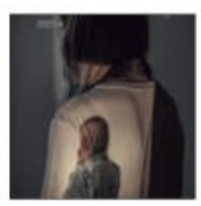
Photo: Przemek Nowak Studio

Hedvig Mollestad & Trondheim Jazz Orchestra
Maternity Beat

Rune Grammofon RCD/LP 2228 (CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Hedvig Mollestad Thomassen (g, v), Martin Myhre Olsen (s), Petter Kraft (ts), Thomas Johansson (t), Trine Knutsen (f), Ståle Storløkken (org, ky, syn), Adrian Loseth Waade (vn), Ellen Brekken (b), Torstein Lofthus (d), Ingvald Andre Vassba (perc), Mae Elise Solberg, Ingebjorg Loe Bjornstad (v) and Erlend Skomsvoll (cond). Rec. October 2021



Mollestad's great gift is to use music to give voice to those who have had their own taken from them. With this large scale ensemble piece, Mollestad takes a fresh turn in her composing journey by foregrounding vocals. Solberg and Bjornstad's voices evoke mothers, children and humanity in their most vulnerable yet celebratory incarnations. In its dark re-working of Scott Walker's uncanny 'The Farmer in the City', the opening vox of 'On the Horizon Part 1' evokes the horror of migrating mothers and children (and fathers) abandoned to their deaths at sea as they desperately seek sanctuary.

Even the apparent innocence of 'Do Re Mi Ma Ma' is an eerie inversion, more nursery crime than rhyme, even as Waade's violin kicks in lost, but lyrical.

This is full-on complex polyphonic music, sometimes evoking *Live/Evil* Miles, with Mollestad privileging space for soprano and tenor sax solos that are as in your face as those big themes she lays down for the ensemble. Given that, Lofthus' bombast on drums is appropriate if at times terrifying, especially on the closing 'Maternity Suite' which wrenches to a halt like Sibelius' *Fifth Symphony*.

Mollestad has a sharp humour and endless resourcefulness. 'Donna Ovis Peppa' is a post bop rave, 'Salt Peanuts' on a sugar rush, powered by crunching keys. There's also a tenderness, but no false sentiment: 'Her Own Shape', with its spoken meditation on maternity ('My self within me will split to be larger/Will part to be stronger') is as unblinkingly honest as it is moving. A cry of love indeed. **Andy Robson**

National Youth Jazz Orchestra
She Said

NYJO Recordings JNCD001 (CD, DL) ★★★

Featuring Josephine Davies, Eva Fidler, Alice Durand, Tom Ridout, Tom Barford (ts), Tom Smith, Alice Leggett, Sara Wald, Naomi Sattar Holmstrom (as), Mark Hurrell (bar s), Maria Rehakova (fl), Klara Devlin, Risa Roelofsma, Tim Rabbitt, Harry Evans, Greg Jefford, Luke Vice-Coles, Christos Stylianides (t), Georgina Jackson (t), (v), Jacob Cooper, Ed Parr, Harrison Maund, Daniel Higham, Eddie Curtis (tb), Steve Payne (fhn), Yazz Ahmed (flhn, elec), Nikki Iles, Joe Hill (p), Miles Mindlin (g), Jack Tustin (b), Shirley Smart (clo), Luke Tomlinson (d), Alex Taylor (perc), Lucy Manning, Helena Debono, Freddie Benedict, Norma Winstone (v) with Laura Jurd, Issie Barratt, Yazz Ahmed and Nikki Iles (comp). Rec. 2019

She Said reflects an ongoing ambition by NYJO to re-shape the gender mix not only of its own projects but jazz as a whole. So this vibrant recording privileges the work of four contemporary composers (Iles, Barratt, Ahmed and Jurd) but also signposts pathfinders like Lil Hardin, whose 'Struttin' with some Barbecue' features Alice Leggett (her alto has also illuminated the work of Mark Lockheart). *She Said* additionally features alumni and performers from across the generations who have NYJO affiliations. Thus, Norma Winstone lays down a sublime 'A Timeless Place', while Josephine Davis covers both writer and performer slots with her debut composition, 'Transition'. Ahmed's 'Nurrquss' is among the more satisfying pieces not simply because it's a rare example of 'Tunisian rave jazz' as she describes it, but also because her early experience of NYJO was problematic. So her happy return here hopefully reflects change not just with the band, but in wider jazz circles. Moreover, this project was recorded before the likes of Olivia Murphy took on the Composer Chair, so there's plenty more talent that's come on board since. He said. **Andy Robson**

Jeff Parker, Eric Revis, Nasheet Waits
Eastside Romp
Rogue Art ROG113 (CD) ★★★★

Jeff Parker ETA IVtet
Mondays At The Enfield Tennis Academy
Eremite/Aguirre MTE 7677 (2 CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Collectively: Jeff Parker (el g), Josh Johnson (as), Eric Revis, Anna Butterss (b) Nasheet Waits and Jay Bellerose (d). Rec. 2016

Not that he needs to convince those who have been paying attention for over two decades, but Jeff Parker strengthens his claim to modern guitar hero status by way of a couple of very different works; between them they serve notice that the 55-year-old Chicagoan-Angeleno is such an important exponent of his instrument because he has reached the stage of his development where he can self-edit with the rigorous judgment of a composer aware of the arc of a performance as well as an improviser with the right flourish to enhance it.

Eastside Romp, the trio session with Nasheet Waits and Eric Revis, is a tightly-focused affair, in which not a single second of the 37 minutes of music is redundant. The band excels on spare, floating rhythms in which concise motifs are given perceptible emotional peaks by Parker's softening and hardening of tone, recalling Hungarian maestro Gabor Szabo in addition to American legend Jim Hall.

Parker's use of pedals also expands the sonic palette by way of jagged edges of reverb and ghostly chorusing, which imbues the songs with a gentle strangeness, a leftfield lyricism.

Mondays... sees Parker's quartet crank up to high level intensity in what is a small pressure cooker of a venue in Los Angeles. The drums and bass axis – Jay Bellerose and Anna Butterss – works impressively, but the presence of Josh Johnson's saxophone is vital insofar as it provides a highly effective element of both convergence and counterpoint to Parker's guitar. The two instruments hover and flutter around each other, making effective harmonic shifts when necessary and settling into wiry ostinatos at just the opportune moment. But the airy beauty created is given greater relief by the granite of Bellerose-Butterss's backbeat, which often drags just behind the pulse to subtle but notable effect.

Parker's organic integration of hip-hop sits well with the abstractions in sound, from sizzling distortion to wavering flange and glassy echo; this pair of releases, on the back of 2020's *Suite For Max Brown*, shows that he has reached a creative peak.

Kevin Le Gendre

Album Interview

O'Higgins & Luft
Pluto
Ubuntu UBU0126 (CD, LP, DL)
★★★★

Dave O'Higgins (s), Rob Luft (g), Ross Stanley (p), Misha Mullov-Abbado (b) and Rod Youngs (d). Rec. 9 January 2022

Three years ago the O'Higgins/Luft alliance mined a rich vein covering the songs of Coltrane and Monk on the appropriately monickered *Plays Monk & Trane*. Now they've embedded that experience with an album of their own material, complemented by covers of Monk's 'Four in One' and the inevitable 'Giant Steps'. The underlying vibe remains the same: O'Higgins taps into his long love of tenor men like Henderson and Brecker, his hard but never oppressive swing anchoring Luft's more charm-ful, visionary flights. It's a potent mix, especially with Stanley's piano on board, providing more harmonic space. O'Higgins takes most writing credits, whether on the Coltrane sonorities of the title track or on the urgent complexity of 'Vague Recollection'. But Luft's songs, be it the lushly melodic 'South Wind' or the Latin-tinged 'Gayetski' provide a rich contrast to O'Higgins' work. And when the two sing together as on 'Ballad for Barry', it quite takes your breath away. **Andy Robson**

Jazzwise talks to Dave O'Higgins and Rob Luft

Given the giants whose shoulders you are standing upon, did you feel you were writing 'in the tradition'? Or doing your own thing?

Dave: I try to write what I want to play on at the gig. It's an important priority with regard to utilising the band to its strengths and communicating with the listener. I would never dare to compare my composing with Monk, but I like to think I've learnt a lot from interpreting his music. 'Trane is a little different as I think he always wrote to challenge his playing style and improvisational concept at any given time. In the end you have to do your thing as honestly as possible, having soaked up as much from the masters as you can!

What does the change to piano bring? And a new bassist?

Dave: A change in sonority and by association, harmonic approach. We wanted to play Monk without piano to force our hand into NOT playing like Monk (while touring the previous *Plays Monk & Trane*). Now we're playing originals, the band will sound different on two counts!

Rob: Misha Mullov-Abbado is a long-standing friend and collaborator of mine. Whenever we work together it feels as though he has a telepathic connection whereby he can instantly read the direction of my improvisations and follow the musical arc of my guitar solos.

What do you think co-leading brings you?

Dave: Sharing the band leading responsibilities makes relatively light work of what can become an onerous and thankless task! Musically things flow very naturally, and mercifully we are both 'first take' kind of musicians. So the recording process is refreshingly quick and easy.

Still that lovely, Rudi Van Gelder-ish studio sound....

Dave: Thank you. It's about as natural and organic as you can get, playing in a small room together with some nice ribbon mics....

How do you top this?!

Rob: While I'm not really the kind of person who thinks about my releases in this qualitative way, I do agree with Dave that the logical follow-up to top this album will be a healthy run of tour dates in 2023 which are currently being finalised! We might not be topping the bill at the O2, but keep an eye peeled for a fairly extensive UK tour in the new year!

Andy Robson

Nicholas Payton
The Couch Sessions

Smoke Sessions Records SSR 2207 (CD, DL) ★★★

Nicholas Payton (t, p, frhn, clav), Buster Williams (b) and Lenny White (d). Rec 12 and 13 July 2022

Nicholas Payton's third album for the Smoke Sessions label twins his multi-instrumental skills with the tight-knit, fiery rhythm team of bassist Buster Williams and drummer Lenny White. Themed on the healing power of creative black American music – the title *Sofa Sessions* has therapeutic roots – voiceovers reinforce the central message and covers celebrate key figures present and past. It makes for an interesting and pertinent set, but overall, the results are patchy. Payton is a fluent and articulate trumpet lead and his piano playing on Keith Jarrett's 'Blossom' is a sensitive album highlight. But Payton's touch on Fender Rhodes and clavinet lacks bite when the instruments take the lead.

The album begins with Payton on Rhodes and the rhythm section on song on a cover of Geri Allen's 'Feed the Fire' – the late composer's sampled voice describes the genre-crossing nature of the Detroit music scene she grew up in; Payton switches from trumpet to piano when the voiceover is done. 'Bust-a-Move' comes next, a Payton original which fails to fly, and then 'Blossom', and Jarrett's recorded voice describing music's elusive power.

Elsewhere, Wayne Shorter's 'Pinocchio' and Herbie Hancock's 'The Sorcerer' are both set up by recorded interviews outlining life with Miles Davis; Payton solos effectively first on trumpet and then on piano. And a surge of swing underpins 'Jazz is a Four-Letter Word'. But the funky originals and a cover of Benny Golson's 'Along Came Betty' don't fare so well

The 13-track set ends on a high. 'From a Flicker to a Flame' is a moving, sampled voice-and-piano-trio homage to Meghan Stabile, founder of the Revive Music Group, who died, aged 39 in June. And here the leader's touch on piano is a delight.

Mike Hobart

Howard Riley/ Keith Tippett
Journal Four

No Business NBCD152 (CD) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Howard Riley (p) and Keith Tippett (p). Rec. 2016

Oh, to have been there! This recording from the 2016 Steinway Spirio Two Piano Festival at Pizza Express in London caught the last live encounter between two of the UK's finest improvising pianists, their first having been some 35 years before. Each has a solo piece on the album but the heavyweight item is an extended improvised duet, running in at just shy of 47 minutes. That said, it is fascinating to be reminded of their separate stylistic voices before hearing the different ways collaboration enlivened their imaginations. Keith Tippett's solo – 'Sea Walk' – has many of his hallmarks: Debussy-esque carefulness interrupted by sudden jazzy flourishes, layers of intense sonic texture and acoustic distortions, dynamic swells and rhythmic undertow, all shaped to a natural conclusion by his own logic.

There's a more obvious jazz language behind Howard Riley's 'Misteriously/Round Midnight', with Monk's timing and modes taken apart in evolving mutations towards an emphatically climactic finish.

Both solo pieces make for an excellent listen, naturally, but here they serve as a warm up act for something bigger than its parts – the duet 'Journal Four'. Starting with sudden staccato monotones, exercises in rhythm build to a rolling orchestral sound through a sequence of exploratory themes. What then follows has a unity of purpose that never flags as melodic and rhythmic ideas are passed to and fro, embracing a moment of township jive, a tidy little waltz Erik Satie might have conjured and finally the disjointed blues of Monk's 'Misterioso' taking it to a close. It feels perfectly crafted, as if two artists had covered a canvas together to produce one immaculate painting. As Riley diffidently observes in the liner notes, "It worked, that's all I can say" – and, indeed, that's all that needs saying. **Tony Benjamin**

Nicholas Payton

Jeremy Rose & The Earshift Orchestra featuring Simon Barker and Chloe Kim
Disruption! The Voice of the Drums

Earshift Music EAR067 (CD, DL) ★★

Jeremy Rose (comp, ts, bcl), Thomas Avgenicos (t), Novak Manojlovic (p), Hilary Geddes (g), Jaques Emery (b), Ben Carey (synth), Simon Barker and Chloe Kim (comp, d). Rec. 17-19 January 2022

Jeremy Rose made sure he was earmarked as talent to watch with 2015's *Wire in the Blood*, not only as a soloist, but as a composer, arranger and conceptualist. He is now one of the leading lights on the Oz jazz scene, seeking out challenging surroundings to test himself, excelling with the trio Vazesh, for example, with just tar (a long-necked lute primarily associated with Azerbaijan) and double bass accompaniment. In what is probably his most challenging assignment so far, *Disruption! The Voice of the Drums* takes us into the world of shaman drum music from South Korea. The drums are foregrounded, the instrumental accompaniment skeletal, and despite the liner notes' peroration of these drummers: Simon Barker ("arguably one of the world's greatest drummers") and Chloe Kim's "great energy in performance," this is one of those projects that would no doubt be stimulating live, as rhythm moves something primal in us all, but in truth when bottled for a recording and then replayed, rather than stimulate the senses, it pummels them into submission; as Dr Johnson once said of *Paradise Lost*, no one ever wished it longer. **Stuart Nicholson**

Gonzalo Rubalcaba & Trio D'Été
Turning Point

5 Passion Records (CD) ★★★★

Gonzalo Rubalcaba (p), Matt Brewer (b) and Eric Harland (d). Rec Nov 2018

Pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba has long pulled different strands of the world's music into thrilling, technically astute coherence. Steeped in Latin flamboyance and possessing a trained technique – he was raised and educated in Havana – his densely textured jazz virtuosity won him a contract with Blue Note in 1990. Then in his twenties, he has hardly put a foot wrong since.

This release is the second of a projected three album project exploring the piano trio form. The first, the freewheeling, collaborative and Grammy-winning *Skyline*, was recorded in New York with bassist Ron Carter and drummer Jack DeJohnette in 2018. In contrast, *Turning Point*, recorded in Miami the following month, is a tightly-argued exploration of the jazz language based on Rubalcaba's work – three tracks re-harmonise and re-configure past compositions.

Matt Brewer and Eric Harland on bass and drums are knockout support, and Rubalcaba is imperious.

The album's opener 'Infantil', from the 2008 album *Avatar*, confirms the leader casts the jazz net wide. Precision piano stabs come with unison bass, stubby walking lines gain tricky hi-hat and snare, and the piece changes shape at the drop of a hat. 'Hard One', from *Inner Voyage,* has more space, but a similar cast, and the bolero 'Otra Mirada' which first appeared on *Supernova* in 2001, is here presented as a brooding, impressionist mist. The new composition is split into three exciting tracks, and delivers thrilling contemporary walking-bass swing. But even here the tight-knit band have surprises in store. 'Ikü', derived from a Yoruba chant, delivers the contemplation and calm to round out an always engaging set. The final album will feature an all-Latin cast. Can't wait!

Mike Hobart

Sonida Solar
Eddie Palmieri Presents Sonido Solar

Truth Revolution Recording Collective TRRC063 (CD) ★★★★

Eddie Palmieri (p, ky), Luques Curtis (b), Louis Fouché (as), Jonathan Powell (t) and Zaccai Curtis (p) plus Jeremy Powell (ts), Joe Fiedler (tr) and Camilo Molina, Reinaldo De Jesus, Marcos López (perc). Rec. 2022

"The young musicians that are on this record have given me the fortitude to write and play piano at another level," states Eddie Palmieri on the press release. Which is no small feat; he might be in his late eighties but the Grammy-laden Nuyorican is still as savvy as they come; hitching himself to an ensemble of younger musicians with chops and vision means everybody wins, including the listener. This work, a release by the pianist's very own tribute band (Sonido Solar or Solar Sound references Palmieri's AKA, The Sun of Latin Music), offers whip smart takes on nine Latin jazz classics – each one superbly arranged by the likes of trombonist Jonathan Powell (who gives 'Mambo Inn' some blow-your-hair-back welly) and pianist Zaccai Curtis (investing

Steve Turre

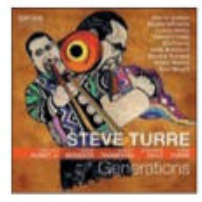
the Charlie Palmieri go-to, Nora Morales's 'Maria Cervantes,' with fresh melodic appeal). While Eddie Palmieri's influence can be felt throughout, he features on piano on just two tracks. One of which, fittingly, is mambo master Tito Puente's 'Picadillo', a tune given space for trumpet and alto solos and inventive improv from Palmieri. On closer 'Suite 176', a co-write between Palmieri and Fouché, the master and his mentors weave and spar with synergistic flair, respecting roots, boldly imagining the future.

Jane Cornwell

Steve Turre
Generations

Smoke Sessions SSR2204 (CD, DL) ★★★

Steve Turre (tb, shells), Wallace Roney Jr. (t), Emilio Modeste (ts), Isaiah J. Thompson (p), Corcoran Holt (b), Orion Turre (d). Guests: James Carter (ts), Ed Cherry, Andy Bassford (g), Trevor Watkis (kbd), Buster Williams, Derrick Barnett (b), Lenny White, Karl Wright (d) and Pedrito Martinez (perc). Rec. 29 March 2022



Trombonist Turre is heard here with some younger players, one of whom is his son Orion, the idea being to stress the continuum 'of real jazz culture' in his words. Most of the 10 titles retain the common front-line, with Carter replacing Modeste on 'Sweet Dreams', this a ballad style feature for both the impressive, Lockjaw-like Carter and virtuoso bassist Williams. Elsewhere, the nominated guests fit in as and when.

'Planting the Ceed' has a Messengers feel, with Modeste fairly anonymous, and Turre imperious in his post-J.J. Johnson manner. 'Dinner With Duke' recalls Turre's early live exposure to Ellington's magic, his mastery of the plunger mute demonstrated, Holt playing arco as Turre unfurls the final fanfare. Magnificent. 'Blue Smoke' is livelier, with Williams on bass and White on drums, young Roney doing well, Turre properly ripe-sounding on this 'up-tempo shuffle blues', Cherry eloquent on guitar. 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' is for solo trombone, the other horns out and percussion added, taken quite serenely and mostly straight, Thompson again crisp and interesting. 'Don D' uses the reggae quartet of Bassford, Watkins, Barnett and Wright and celebrates the Skatalites with whom Turre recorded apparently, and their leader, trombonist Don Drummond. It's engaging and young Roney Jr again excels. Danceable, too. He also does well on 'Pharoah's Dance'. As ever with Turre, this is something of a mix-and-match affair; good to hear some newer players, but Turre is clearly the star. **Peter Vacher**

Various Artists
Blue Note Re:imagined II

Blue Note 4538239 (LP, CD, DL) ★★★

Yazz Ahmed (t), Conor Albert (g, ky), Parthenope Wald-Harding (s, f, v), Swindle (g), Nubiyan Twist including Tom Excell (g) and Nick Richards (s, v), Ned Franc, Oscar Jerome (v, g), Daniel Casimir (b), Ria Moran, Oscar #Worldpeace, Cherise, Ego Ella May, Kay Young (v), Theon Cross (tba), Maya Delilah (v, g), Venna, Marco Bernardis, Binker Golding (s), Reuben James (v, p) and Jon Moody (ky). Rec. date not stated

Don Was has maintained Blue Note's identity within the UMG monolith by broadening its range and deepening its roots, welcoming back old hands such as Bobby Hutcherson alongside an enviable current front line including Ambrose Akinmusire, while finding room for Willie Nelson. The *Re:imagined* albums similarly let contemporary names cover the catalogue, a mutually beneficial process with form ranging from Us3's Herbie-sampling hit 'Cantaloop (Flip Fantasia)' (1994) to Makaya McCraven's expansive improvising around vintage tracks, *Deciphering the Message* (2021).

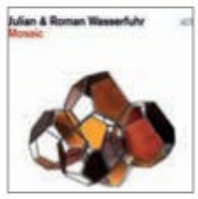
Like its predecessor, *Blue Note Re:imagined II* leans on a UK generation whose straightahead education blends with a hip-hop and grime environment; saxophonist-producer Venna, for instance, who brought jazz instrumentation to drill, here turns Donald Byrd's 'Where Are We Going' into a Smokey Robinson-style quiet storm of symphonised, summer breeze saxes and vocal harmonies. This is a contemporary R&B album, really, mellowly mining the 1970s more than hard bop's heyday.

Original tracks are sometimes irrelevant, sometimes stimulating launch-pads. Oscar Jerome dips Grant Green's '(Why You So) Green With Envy' in buzzing fields of static, rap and dub, ending with his guitar tone beatifically back in Green's world. The project is justified by Daniel Casimir and Ria Moran's beautiful immersion in Wayne Shorter's 1979 track 'Lost'. Moran's murmured, mournful vocal lullaby floats unmoored over an acoustic shimmer of piano, sax, drums and Casimir, whose plucked bass solo brims with reflective invention.

Theon Cross's tuba hits Monk's 'Epistrophy' with speaker-splattering force, dirty electric guitar whipping through a foundational 1940s Blue Note text, with a sure feel for its underlying, carnivalesque swing. The smoky coalescing of Binker Golding's band around Joe Lovano's 'Fort Worth' as his sax ascends over post-Hendrix hard bop; the gospel harmonies of Cherise's take on Norah Jones' 'Sunrise', and Franc Moody's stately homage to Donald Byrd's spiritual 'Cristo Redentor', complete with Morricone-esque surf guitar twangs, are other highlights: a reasonable hit-rate on a record rarely settling for classic sounds. **Nick Hasted**

Julian & Roman Wasserfuhr
Mosaic
ACT Music 9950-2 (CD, DL) ★★★

Julian Wasserfuhr (t), Roman Wasserfuhr (p), with various accompanists inc Tony Lakatos (ts), Tim Lefebvre (b) and Keith Carlock (d). Rec. May, June 2022



After 17 years of collaboration with ACT and six albums, *Mosaic* emerges as a product of pandemic reflection, resulting is a series of portraits of treasured friends, musicians and family. The music of the brothers Wassefruhr is clearly thought out, concise in execution and is reassuringly middle of the road.

There is a sense you have heard all their compositions before, perhaps because the harmonies follow predictable paths and the neat, hummable reassuring melody lines are of genial disposition. It's all well crafted and presented with the charm of a genial *maître d* showing you to your seat, snapping his fingers for the waiter to bring the menus and wishing you *bon appetit*. But front of house gloss is only one element of a restaurant experience; it all hinges on the main course, and while the presentation is perfect, the taste here is a little vanilla. It lacks a wholesome sauce that pulls the dish together with the kind of culinary depth that only the best chefs can conjure up. But of course, there are many in the restaurant who are not gastronomes. They are having a good time. They don't care it's not *haute cuisine*, they say let's enjoy ourselves. And why not?

Stuart Nicholson

Photo: Ben Wolfe

Wesseltoft & Schwarz

Bugge Wesseltoft/ Henrik Schwarz
Duo II
Jazzland 3779493 (CD) ★★★

Bugge Wesseltoft (p, syn, marimba), Henrik Schwarz (computer), Sebastian Studnitzky (t), Paul Valikoski, Grégoire Simon (vn), Ildiko Ludwig (vla), Boram Lie (clo), Kid Be Kid, Jennifer Kae, Jemma Endersby and Catherine Schorling (v). Rec. 2022

Norwegian keyboardist/ composer Bugge Wesseltoft and German computer musician and producer Henrik Schwarz began their partnership back in 2009, and made it plain from the off that none of the early-digital disjuncts between jazz's rhythmic elasticity and the microchip's mathematical austerity were going to apply to them.

They seemed bonded by a shared idiomatic breadth of rare scope, embracing jazz, contemporary-classical, and dance music, alongside the one-touch agility of cutting-edge improvisers. The pair are joined here by a vocal trio on one track and a string quartet on two, but their empathy remains the hot core of the music. The spacious opener 'Woodened Stone' interweaves a looping marimba hook, delicate piano figures, and quiet textural swells, while 'Future Strings' is a computer-concocted brew of big orchestral sonorities building on a nimbly-scurrying minimalist figure, and quietly confiding Berlin singer Kid Be Kid brings an intimate soulfulness redoubled to a choral pleading on 'My First Life'. The string quartet Solistenensemble Kaleidoscop join the duo to shuffle baroque, dance grooves and minimalism on two accounts of 'Duolism', and 'Bastorius' - for the duo and trumpeter Sebastian Studnitzky - will steal the show for jazz fans in its infectious merging of rhythmically-sassy Miles-like trumpet phrasing, punchy acoustic-piano comping, and agile digital bass and percussion patterns.

As with all Wesseltoft–Schwarz meetings, the rituals of the dancefloor are never far away, but there's a joyfulness in the way they handle those rituals that's always hard to resist.

John Fordham

CD Shortcuts: New Releases

Atlanticus
Blue Haven
Union Records ★★★

US tenorist Peter Fraize's robust soloing style is a main attraction on B3 organist Terry Seabrook's retro straightahead Brighton-based quartet's debut that covers all bases from Hammond R&B, hard bop to post-1960s modal on some neat originals and a well-judged Afro Cuban twist on 'Moanin''.

Kim Åge
Kim Åge Furuhaug
Jansen Records ★★★

From a three-album project created by each member of Norwegian trio Orions Belte, it's the turn of the drummer Åge and his eerily infectious ambient ensemble recording with its alt-indie spacey pop textures, stark cinematic soundscapes, and Euro-jazz instrumental breaks featuring Norwegian improvisers among them Ole Morten Vågan.

Caity Gyorgy
Featuring...
La Reserve Records ★★★

A Canadian singer-songwriter, along with a solid quartet backing and guests including compatriot Christine Jensen, gives some personality to her own derivative songs (and standards) that match her supple bebop-y voice drawing from Ella Fitzgerald and Annie Ross.

J4
Beatles With A Jazz Twist
Self-release ★★

This South Wales acoustic guitar-piano-bass-drums quartet aren't the Bad Plus deconstruction types, instead taking a more thoughtful, breezy Jarrett/Metheny-influenced route, improvising on Beatles songs that are given a too MOR standards-type treatment that feels like a disservice even if the themes are interpreted with good taste.

Aubrey Johnson/ Randy Ingram
Play Favourites
Sunnyside ★★★

A vocal-piano duo rooted in the mainstream covers songs by Billie Ellish, Joni M to Brazilian standards through to Winstone/Taylor; Johnson is a flighty alto and natural improviser and her impressively poised scatting is given simpatico support by the modest Ingram.

Svaneborg Kardyb
Over Tage
Gondwana Records ★★

The band moniker is made up of the surnames of this young Danish keyboard/drums duo that park up somewhere between Frahm and Wesseltoft with their chilled less-is-less folky melodies and ambient-pop electronica and though you could occasionally end up hypnotised, you might find yourself dozing off.

Takuya Kuroda
Midnight Crisp
First Word Records ★★★

The Japanese trumpeter, who's recorded for Blue Note, releases a six track EP that keeps largely to the hip side of contemporary funk-jazz; the rhythm section kills it and the blending of influences ranging from hiphop, Afro-beat, R&B to bop and Headhunters is stylish in the main.

LIUN + The Science Fiction Band
Lily of the Nile
Heartcore Records ★★★★

LIUN is a songwriting platform that the highly-rated Swiss vocalist Lucia Cadotsch shares with German multi-reedist Wanja Slavin, and here her unadorned, haunting vocal is perfectly complemented by some effervescent large ensemble arrangements that lie somewhere between contemporary orchestral jazz, experimental rock-pop and chamber minimalism.

Fabian Neubauer/ Duy Luong/Pablo Liebhaber
Tales
Leo Records ★★★

This exploratory young German piano trio have an intriguing ethos, favouring a stealthy, floaty yet jazzily percussive approach that draws from Paul Bley-like acoustic impressionism through to more trippy Wurlitzer-inflected and electronica soundworlds.

Number Junky
Earth Matters
Self Release ★★★

Number Junky is Danish Kristian Borring's trio and this album is well worth checking out for the guitarist-composer's gorgeously mellow yet soulful jazz lyricism on originals with NYC rising star guest pianist Fabian Almazan making his infectious alt-Latin spirit felt on a few tracks.

Sloth Racket
Organising Space
Luminous Label ★★★

Saxophonist-composer Cath Roberts' band is too unfashionably hip to receive any jazz award nominations, with their imaginatively feral mix of avant-punk jazz, and Beefheart-influenced grunge-thrash, and a cohesive quintet that keep moving in the same direction.

Jason Yeager
Unstuck in Time: the Kurt Vonnegut Suite
Sunnyside Records ★★

If you know your Vonnegut, this celebration of the centenary of the jazz-loving author's birth by a NY-based pianist should be of interest; for those focussed mainly on the music, his ensemble writing, that references bebop, early jazz and Broadway styles, might draw a more lukewarm response. **Selwyn Harris**

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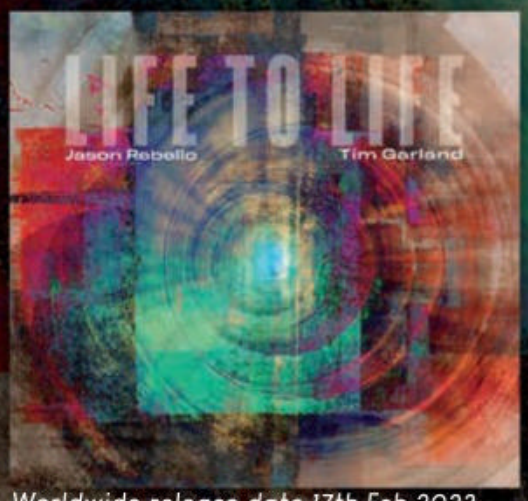

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Albums: Reissues/Archive

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Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers

Four Classic Albums

Avid Jazz AMSC1420 (2 CD)

★★★★

Art Blakey (d), Bill Hardman, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard (t), Curtis Fuller (tb), Jackie McLean (as), Wayne Shorter (ts), Sam Dockery, Ray Bryant, Bobby Timmons, Cedar Walton (p), Spanky De Brest, Oscar Pettiford, Jymie Merritt, Reggie Workman (b), Jo Jones (d), Charles Wright (d, timp), Candido and Sabu (bo). Rec. 12-13 December 1956, 22 February 1957, 13-14 June 1961, 23-24 October 1962

The four named albums (*Hard Bop*, *Drum Suite*, *Impulse!!!* and *Caravan*), emanate from a period when Blakey and company were seldom out of the studios, coursing through these Columbia, Impulse! and Riverside sessions while fitting in extended road assignments. What a time this was. Still, none of these albums quite measure up to the best of Blakey. If 'Cranky Spanky' from *Hard Bop* sounds forced, Hardman straining to make an impact, with McLean urgent, it is the unsung Dockery who scores on 'Stella by Starlight' and throughout, McLean soaring on the overly-animated 'My Heart Stood Still' where Hardman seems to be trying too hard. Avid has chosen to run the band tracks from *Drum Suite* to follow on the *Hard Bop* tracks (same personnel) for the sake of continuity with the Percussion Ensemble given a clearer run.

Thus 'Stanley's Stiff Chickens' (?) follows and is fine, markedly more relaxed, and better for it. If Dockery's is the name to stress – he rates no mention in the *Grove* jazz dictionary – then McLean (still only 25) is forceful and inspired. The percussion tracks, three in number, are fun to hear, and it's good to recall pianist Ray Bryant on his 'Cubano Chant' and cellist Pettiford on 'Oscalypso'. The Impulse! album on CD2 from 1961 assembles a Messengers top team – Morgan, Fuller, Shorter and Timmons – with Fuller's 'Alamode' kicking from the off, Shorter effusive and Morgan full-on, Blakey driving as only he could. Marvellous music.

Further tracks concentrate on standards with less impactive results. *Caravan* substitutes Hubbard for Morgan and again mixes originals and standards. Bassist Reggie Workman is missing from Avid's personnel listing and Riverside's sound lacks guts but the music, via Shorter and Hubbard's originals is fine with the trumpeter quite perfect on 'Skylark'.

So, a mixed bag – but just good enough for four stars.

Peter Vacher

Chick Corea

The Montreux Years

BMG CAT583 (CD, 2 LP)

★★★★

Chick Corea (p, el p, syn, Keytar) with Chick Corea New Trio, Chick Corea Freedom Band, Chick Corea Akoustic Band, Chick Corea Elektric Band, Chick Corea Quartet, Chick Corea and The Bavarian Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra. Rec. 1981–2010.

When Chick Corea's long and productive career was ended in February 2021, he left behind a recorded legacy that the world of jazz has yet to come to terms with. It is so vast and diverse it blows apart the canard, 'Jack of all trades, master of none', simply because Corea was a consummate master of every musical direction he pursued. Here, the nine tracks on this double LP set (the CD has eight) include seven performances by different Corea ensembles between 1981 and 2010, that with the exception of 'Interlude' by the Elecktric Band – a tedious call and response between Corea on Keytar and the audience, who sing back each little musical motif played by Corea – the set illustrates the seemingly effortless creativity of Corea's playing, that in seven different musical contexts never failed to deliver keyboard mastery at the highest level of creativity.

Album highlights include a Chick Corea Quartet (with Joe Henderson on tenor, Gary Peacock on bass, Roy Haynes, drums) version of 'Trinkle Tinkle,' the Acoustik Trio's 'Quartet No. 2' (a piece he originally recorded in a quartet with Michael Brecker) and Corea's performance with a symphonic ensemble of one of his own works, 'America (Continents Pt.4).' **Stuart Nicholson**

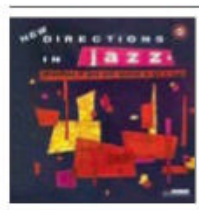
Directions In Jazz Unit directed by Bill Le Sage

New Directions in Jazz

R&B Records RANBO90 (2 CD)

★★★★

Bill Le Sage (vb, p), Ronnie Ross (bar, as), Johnny Scott (as, fl, cl), Bob Burns, Vic Ash (as, cl), Spike Heatley (b), Tony Carr (d) and the Freddie Alexander Cello Ensemble. Rec. 28 February, 16 June, 19 October, 18 December 1964



This is a valuable addition to the three albums the Directions in Jazz Unit made, two under their own name for Phillips, *Directions in Jazz* from 1964 and *Road to Ellingtonia* from 1965; and one for World Record Club entitled *Twice Times Keyboard* (which does not credit Directions in Jazz, but merely gives the DiJ personnel) from 1966.

This R&B Records set comprises two CDs, the first a session for NDR, the German radio station (hopefully, one day the role of German radio in documenting British jazz in the 1960s, and the welcome employment it brought, will be compiled on disc) and three sessions on the second CD for the BBC, including two tracks from the ensemble's widely circulated *Jazz 625* performance plus three more tracks for their NDR session.

The ensemble, with its unusual line-up based around the Bill Le Sage/Ronnie Ross Quartet with an additional two saxes and a string quartet was welcome tonal relief to the then dominant trumpet, saxophone plus rhythm sound on both sides of the Atlantic. DiJ offered an altogether different sonic palette with a cello quartet woven into the fabric of the arrangements, which were highly original, offering Le Sage, Johnny Scott and Ross an opportunity for quiet experimentation, often influenced by elements drawn from classical music that followed Le Sage's lead in attempting – successfully – to create orchestral settings with as few instruments as possible.

It neatly sidesteps the jazz and classical Third Stream experiments in the USA with light, buoyant textures that always swung, and the avoidance of dissonance that Third Stream embraced – even Le Sage's 'Improvisation on a Twelve Tone Scale' remains light on its feet. **Stuart Nicholson**

Robert Glasper

Photo: Cognito Frolab

Robert Glasper
Black Radio (10th Anniversary Deluxe Edition)

Blue Note 88333 (2 CD, 3 LP, DL)

★★★★

Robert Glasper (p, el p, ky), Casey Benjamin (as, vocoder), Derrick Hodge (b), Chris Dave (d), Jahi Sundance (turntables), Stokley Williams (perc) plus guests inc Yasin Bey, Erykah Badu, Bilal, Lalah Hathaway, Lupe Fiasco, Shafiq Husayn, Messhell Ndegeocello, Ledisi, KING and Musiq Soulchild (v). Rec. 2012

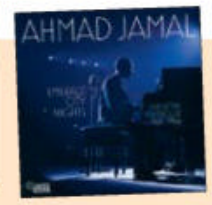
By the time he made *Black Radio* in 2012, Robert Glasper was one of the biggest new names in jazz, on the back of the success of *Double Booked* and *In My Element*. Or rather, he was the artist who had the keys to the castle of young listeners of colour who didn't think they liked jazz, at least what was seen as the forbiddingly esoteric end of it.

Having worked with feted producer J Dilla, Glasper knew what the nuances of hip-hop production entailed and there seemed nobody more suited to bridging the gap between rap aesthetics, jazz and soul than the Texan pianist. *Black Radio* gave credence to that idea. The cast list – Yasin Bey, Erykah Badu, Meshell Ndgeocello, Ledisi, among others – made the project De Millean in nature, but the result justified the hype and this 10-year anniversary reissue shows that the work hasn't at all aged.

In fact, what stands out the most is the eclecticism that actually reaches far beyond a marriage of improvisers and rappers. While the thought-provoking rhymes of Yasin Bey and Lupe Fiasco may draw the most attention there are some fine melodies to enjoy, not least because Glasper maintained his excellent working relationship with the supremely talented singer Bilal and also called on Erykah Badu and Ledisi among others. Original tunes such as 'Move Love' and 'The Consequences Of Jealousy' sit well with covers of Sade, David Bowie, Nirvana and Mongo Santamaria. Which means that *Black Radio* was much more wide-ranging than most would have possibly imagined.

Regardless of the history of segregated broadcasting in America, black people have listened to all kinds of radio whenever they have been able to. Glasper set his creative dial along such lines; the result was worth airtime then, just as it is now.

Kevin Le Gendre



Ahmad Jamal
Emerald City Lights: Live at the Penthouse 1963-64

Jazz Detective DPDG1 (2 CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Ahmad Jamal (p), Richard Evans, Jamil Nasser (b) and Chuck Lampkin (d). Rec. June 1963, March-April 1964

Emerald City Lights: Live at the Penthouse 1965-66

Jazz Detective DPDG2 (CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Ahmad Jamal (p), Jamil Nasser (b), Chuck Lampkin, Vernel Fournier and Frank Gant (d). Rec. March and October 1965, September 1966

Spanning the period of his Argo releases *Naked City Theme*, *Extensions*, and *Roar of the Greasepaint*, these two double-album collections of live concert broadcasts from the Penthouse Club in Seattle vastly increase the available number of Ahmad Jamal's early-mid 1960s recordings. The redoubtable producer Zev Feldman unearthed these treasures and they are presented to as high a standard as his landmark releases on the Resonance label.

Jamal himself has always valued recordings of live events over studio sessions, and that's because the audience becomes part of the performance, as he interacts with his listeners by creating space, altering dynamics, producing surprise interjections and occasionally leaving bass and drums to develop ideas he's sketched out for them at the keyboard. Apart from a brief return by Vernell Fournier to the percussion chair, from 1963 through to all but the final session here, the drummer in Jamal's trio was Chuck Lampkin (before he left music to become a TV news anchor). And after a short stay by Richard Evans, the bassist was Jamil Nasser, who was still with Jamal when I first heard the trio live, 25 years after these records. Nasser and Lampkin's empathy with Jamal is first-rate, and the very longevity of the relationship helps create a tight sense of ensemble – thinking, breathing and phrasing together, wherever Jamal takes the music, and this is the core of these exceptional performances.

That's not to say the tracks with Evans are lacking in fine moments, notably the Bach-like keyboard counterpoint in the bassist's composition 'Minor Adjustments' that contrasts with some romping sections over a firm backbeat, and a hell-for-leather version of Hodges' 'Squatty Roo'. But the main trio shines in an extended 'Keep On Keeping On' with all Jamal's famous control of dynamics apparent from the head onwards, while a 13-minute 'Minor Moods' allows us to witness just how he holds an audience by offering a feast of subtle variety.

The second 1965-66 volume is no less impressive, with that same core trio stretching out on 'I Didn't Know What Time It Was' with some of Jamal's most rhapsodic playing leading into a surprisingly uptempo treatment of the song. And a foray into Anthony Newley/Leslie Bricusse territory gives us a dramatic contrast with an almost sombre lead-in to what becomes a joyous 'Feeling Good'. All in all, a marvellous collection of a protean pianist at the top of his form with totally sympathetic trio partners. **Alyn Shipton**

Photo: Don Bronstein

Johnny Hammond
Gears

Jazz Dispensary/Milestone CR00518 (LP)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Johnny Hammond (el p, syn, org), Fonce Mizell (cvt, v), Larry Mizell (solina, v, arr), Julian Priester (tb), Chuck Rainey (el b), Hadley Caliman (ts), Roger Glenn (f, vib), Michael White (vn), Jerry Peters (p, el p), John Rowin, Craig McMullen (g), Harvey Mason (d) Kenneth Nash (perc), and Sigidi Abdallah (cond). Rec. July-September 1975

Christmas has come early for jazz-funk fans in the shape of this superb reissue of a long-unavailable classic of the genre from Jazz Dispensary, an imprint of Craft Recordings.

Having sprinkled funky fairydust over Donald Byrd and Gary Bartz among others in the early 1970s, ace producing-writing team the Mizell brothers (Larry and Alfonso 'Fonce') then turned their attention to Kentucky-born keys wizard Johnny Hammond – at the time mostly noted for his Hammond B3 work – getting him to add synth and Rhodes to his musical palette and producing for him the acclaimed *Gambler's Life* in 1974.

A year later they followed up with *Gears*, which was even better, containing some of Hammond's most sparkling electric piano playing and which contained the immortal (and hyper-funky) 'Shifting Gears', a longtime favourite with the breaks and beats crowd; as well as the slinky 'Can't We Smile' and the much-sampled 'Los Conquistadores Chocolatés', with its recitation by Byrd/Bobbi Humphrey associate William Jordan. *Gears* was a big critical and commercial hit, especially here in the UK, where funksters took it to their hearts. Hugely influential – on the nascent disco movement as well as jazz-funk – the album remains a compelling listen 47 years on.

Beautifully 'AAA' remastered by Kevin Gray from the original analogue tapes and packaged in a tip-on sleeve, it sounds, and looks, better than ever. Add it to your Xmas list, funkateers!

Kevin Whitlock

Joe Harriott
Quintet at the BBC

R&B Records RANDBO84 (CD)

★★★★

Joe Harriott (as) with various personnel inc Shake Keane, Ian Carr, Les Condon (t), Pat Smythe, Michael Garrick (p), Coleridge Goode (b), Bobby Orr and Phil Seamen (d). Rec. 1961, 1964, 1966

This is a portrait of Joe Harriott, working musician – the liner notes are headed 'The Rake's Progress' – framed in three ensemble contexts, playing a mixture of his own compositions, leavened with originals by the likes of Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Bobby Timmons and the occasional standard from the Great American Songbook.

This mix is typical of the BBC at the time, which, on a 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' basis, insisted on a mix of American jazz standards. Artists had to stand their ground to get their own original compositions played, even by the mid-1960s.

What is front and centre is Harriott's highly personal, cutting tone on his instrument that demands attention. It always sounds as if he's slightly sharp, he isn't, but it gets your attention. Throughout, his solos are resolutely original, compelling in construction and faultless in execution. Whatever the material, 'Moanin'', 'St Thomas,' 'Round About Midnight,' that even back then had been done to death, Harriott always has something fresh, new and original to say. Of course, he is best framed by his own original material and on 'Spiritual Blues,' 'Tempo,' 'Calypso Sketches' and 'Count Twelve' he contributes solos you want to hear again and again. **Stuart Nicholson**

Freddie Hubbard
Complete Blue Note & Impulse! '60s Studio Sessions

Mosaic MD7-274 (7 CD)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Freddie Hubbard (t), Julian Priester, Curtis Fuller (tb), Kiane Zimadi (euph), James Spaulding, Eric Dolphy, Hosea Taylor (as, f), Tina Brooks, Hank Mobley, Jimmy Heath, Wayne Shorter, John Gilmore, Joe Henderson (ts), McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton, Tommy Flanagan, Herbie Hancock, Ronnie Mathews, Harold Mabern (p), Sam Jones, Paul Chambers, Larry Ridley, Art Davis, Reggie Workman, Eddie Khan, Bob Cranshaw (b), Clifford Jarvis, Philly Joe Jones, Elvin Jones, Louis Hayes, Joe Chambers, Pete LaRoca (d), Big Black (cga) plus big-band (6 tracks), strings (3 tracks) and Wayne Shorter (arr). Rec. 19 June 1960–5 March 1966

The enclosed essay by Bob Blumenthal reminds us that three promising 1960s trumpeters all emerged in 1938: Hubbard, Booker Little (born just five days before Freddie) and Lee Morgan. With Little dying at the age of 23, it's hard to assess where his exciting beginnings would have taken him, while Morgan, short dead at 33, was at an interesting stage of his career.

Hubbard, at that point in the early 1970s, was just at the beginning of his most commercially successful period (although continuing his uncompromising playing live, for instance in 1977 with subsequent producer Larry Klein on bass). For a while, Freddie eclipsed Lee's popularity but in recent years, with at least three books and a movie about him, Morgan seems to have surged back in listeners' esteem.

But you can make a case for Hubbard having been the most adventurous and compelling of the three, especially in the first half of the 1960s, which is the timescale of this excellent reissue. For listeners who were around at the time, it inevitably brings to mind the enormous impact of albums from *Open Sesame* (see *Jazzwise* 252) to *Blue Spirits*, via *Hub Cap*, *Hub-Tones* and *Ready For Freddie*. His virtuoso facility was matched by an ambiguous tone that was less openly optimistic than, say, Clifford Brown or indeed Morgan, and the construction of his solos was often unexpected. It's fair to say that his own albums (including *The Body And The Soul* with a large ensemble arranged by Wayne Shorter) are more straight-ahead in conception than his recorded appearances with Ornette or Coltrane. They're more comparable to his work with the contemporaneous Jazz Messengers of which he was a member, but the more adventurous music that was around undoubtedly rubbed off on his solo work, whatever the context.

All this early material, including several alternate takes, has been issued on CD before, but the booklet is a collectors' item containing Francis Wolff pictures of no fewer than 24 of the musicians involved. **Brian Priestley**

Freddie Hubbard

Steve Lacy & Evan Parker
Chirps

Corbett Vs Dempsey CVSD CD095 (CD, DL)

★★★★

Evan Parker and Steve Lacy (ss). Rec. July 1985

A very welcome reissue of a soprano sax duo recording originally released in 1985 on the legendary FMP Records that, according to the *Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD* is "one of the best and most significant free albums of the decade".

It's also a recording that hasn't dated. By the late 1970s Steve Lacy, who had inspired Coltrane to take up soprano sax two decades earlier, was dubbing his music 'poly-free', an approach, somewhat ahead of its time, that veered between abstract improv and more structural elements.

But here Lacy, in a head-to-head with iconoclastic sax-improviser Evan Parker live at Haus am Waldsee in Berlin, play entirely free and 'in the moment'. In an intense yet involving exchange, Lacy and Parker demonstrate an uncanny ability to mould a highly convincing structural narrative together on the fly at mostly lightning tempos.

Such a dialogue between soprano saxes lasting close to 45 minutes will be uncomfortable on the ears for many, even involving such a high-level pairing as this, but on the aptly-titled *Chirps* the shrieky high-end of the soprano range is explored only in passing. Instead there's a fascination in how the pair's super-quick reflexes set up an intimate exchange and development of melodic motifs, the latter a key trademark of Lacy's, and abrupt shifts in mood and intensity. A significant reissue then, with an appeal that reaches beyond the hardcore improv scene. **Selwyn Harris**

Henry Lowther's Quarternity
Never Never Land

Jazz in Britain JIB-36-S-CD (2 CD, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Henry Lowther (t, flhn, vn), Art Themen, Alan Wakeman (ts, ss), Phil Lee (g), Dave Green Chris Laurence (b) and Trevor Tomkins (d). Rec. June 1974, April and November 1976, July 1978

Quaternity may very well be the British modern jazz group that you've never heard of or is that just me?

It transpires that it maintained an active performance schedule during the 1970s, its members doubtless fitting in its gigs while juggling a variety of other assignments but was never recorded. So, this double-CD 'previously unreleased' collection is especially welcome.

If Lowther (at the age of 81) is now a doyen of British jazz, he was but a callow youth during Quaternity's lifespan. But here he is, his trumpet tone bright and pure, the facility quite perfect in a setting typical of its time with fusion, rock and free aspects all hinted at and absorbed.

The motifs are intriguing, the late Trevor Tomkins playing evermore complex drum patterns in the mode of the day. Fascinating to observe the presence of Green on bass, an association that continues with Lowther's present Still Waters group. Phil Lee knew his way around the templates of jazz and blues guitar, his more rock-oriented interludes fitting in well to the overall shape and direction of this music, much of it composed by him.

Each piece is cleverly structured, the underlying figures almost mesmeric in their repetition; the first four tracks are by the quartet, while the later ones benefit from the presence of Themen or Wakeman. These latter hew closer to the conventional hard bop format, although still sounding adventurous in their intentions, Lowther soloing with urgency and both saxophonists echoing the trend to tonal extremes.

The title track soon moves into the headier world of freedom, Trevor Tomkins riding out the storm as Lowther breaks cover. 'Chinese Wand' (by Lowther) opens with the requisite oriental touches, its repeated rhythmic sequence quite compelling, Lowther exhibiting his exquisite violin work, Lee quite spare over Tomkins' insistent drums.

This is stirring, resourceful and finely-wrought music, with Lowther's rarely-heard violin a splendid bonus.

Peter Vacher

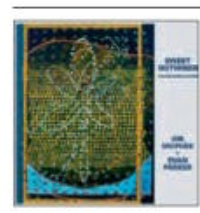
Joe McPhee & Evan Parker

Sweet Nothings (For Milford Graves)

Corbett vs. Dempsey CvsD CD085 (CD)

★★★★

Joe McPhee (ss, ts, c) and Evan Parker (ss, ts). Rec. 2003



Two saxophone giants come together at the Chicago Cultural Center to pay homage to drummer and fine artist Milford Graves, as part of the seventh Empty Bottle Festival of Jazz & Improvised Music that was held on 26 April, 2003. The seven pieces that make up McPhee and Parker's 'Sweet Nothings' suite were performed before Graves' passing in 2021, thus being more of a celebratory salute to the man and his work rather than a respectful memorial. Captured by mobile recordist Malachi Ritscher, this is only the second time that McPhee and Parker have played together as a duo, the first being at a Chicago studio in 1998 where they restricted themselves to only playing tenor saxophones.

The resulting *Chicago Tenor Duets* recording was eventually released on Japanese label Okka Disk in 2002. Here they widen their instrumentation by adding soprano saxophones and McPhee's pocket cornet to the mix, a decision that pushes their tightly meshed playing into more varied areas of exploration.

Abandoning any desire to let rip, McPhee and Parker choose instead to calmly connect and bounce ideas off each other.

The result is an amiable musical duel between two improvisational masters where resonance, harmony and shades of playful discord blend together to produce sounds that are still challenging but also, at times, tender.

Edwin Pouncey

Charles Mingus

Landmark Albums 1956-60

Acrobat ACTRCD9124 (3CD)

★★★★

Charles Mingus (b) with Jimmy Knepper, Willie Dennis (tb), Jackie McLean (as), Shafi Hadi, John Handy (as, ts), J.R. Monterose, Booker Ervin (ts), Pepper Adams (bs), Mal Waldron, Wade Legge, Horace Parlan (p), Willie Jones, Dannie Richmond (d) and Jean Shepherd (narr, 1 track). Rec. 30 January 1956-12 May 1959

Having warned in *Jazzwise* 275 that my reissue of the year "may not be for Mingus beginners", here is the perfect gift for just such a reader. It comprises the complete contents of the renowned *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, *The Clown*, *Blues And Roots* and *Mingus Ah Um* (including five tracks from these sessions that were only released later – though not the few alternate takes that have emerged).

This means, as well as the extraordinary title numbers of the first two albums, such famous tracks as 'Haitian Fight Song', 'Reincarnation Of A Lovebird', 'Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting', 'Moanin'', 'Better Git It In Your Soul' and 'Goodbye Pork Pie Hat'. It also means a crash course in Mingus's compositional techniques and their varied textural and emotional outcomes, including brilliant solo contributions from all the players listed above, including of course Mingus. (It's worth noting that *Ah Um* is taken from the edition that restores some solos originally edited out.) Sound quality is comparable to previous CD issues and a lengthy booklet note assembles many previously published comments, including one from John Fordham and much of the original liner-notes. Here, we have no space for such detail but, whether you're a beginner or not, there's a whole lot of great music here in which to luxuriate.

Brian Priestley

Julian Nicholas Band

Rising

Cordial Recordings CORDLP011 (LP)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Julian Nicholas (ts, ss), Mark Edwards (p, ky), John Bedford, Thaddeus Kelly (b), David Wickins and Mike Pickering (d). Rec. 1992

Originally released in the 1990s on cassette and CD on titles such as *Square Groove*, *Mountain People* and *Heavy Plant Crossing*, chances are these exemplary recordings will be new to the majority of listeners. *Rising*, the first album of a trilogy, leaves you wanting more. This music, although 30 years old, stands up well to contemporary scrutiny.

Quite simply it has not dated, and paradoxically underlines why Julian Nicholas has been described as "something of a well kept secret." Had *Rising* enjoyed greater currency in the 1990s, the recorded evidence here suggests that would be far from a secret, well kept or otherwise. The intro to 'Mountain People,' grabs your attention with reverb encased soprano sax "cry" that echoes through imaginary mountains and valleys. Here is something different, well conceived and rhythmically vibrant, the legato tenor sax theme seems longer than the breath available to play it, but does not detract – composition and conception make for a totally compelling performance. 'Lucky Star' follows in similar, but not the same) mood and concept, rhythmically sophisticated with Nicholas on soprano this time, while 'A Thousand Ships' maintains this "trip factor' feel", as Pat Metheny calls it: a rhythmic forward momentum that takes you on a journey with melodic and harmonic twists and turns, analogous to scenes *en route*.

This may be Brit-jazz from three decades ago, but it vibrates with compelling relevance in the present. **Stuart Nicholson**

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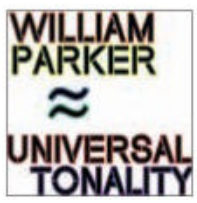
William Parker

William Parker
Universal Tonality

Centering Records/Aum 1030 (2 CD)

★★★

William Parker (b, dilruba, shakuhachi, donso n'goni), Jin Hi Kim (komunga), Miya Masoaka (koto), Billy Bang, Jason Kao Hwang (vn), Joe Morris (g), Rob Brown (as), Matt Lavelle (tpt), Daniel Carter (reeds, brass), Cale Brandley (ts) Jerome Cooper Moore (balafon, chiramia, keys, drums), Dave Burrell (p), Roger Blank (balafong), Leena Conquest (v), Steve Swell, Grachan Moncur III (tb) and Gerald Cleaver (d). Rec. 2002



The veteran bassist-bandleader William Parker has reached the point in his career where he stands like a tall tree around which wrap many branches of black music history.

As this enjoyable, 2-CD set shows, he keeps growing his own ideas from the roots he knows only too well. *Universal Tonality* is a strikingly varied offering, moving from towering orchestral sound to intimate spoken word recitals and all points in between, and if it is accurate to describe Parker as a modern day avant-garde titan he is particularly effective when broadening the non-western pathways opened up by such as Trane, Pharoah and Don Cherry, as if he was intent on putting more Africa into *Africa Brass*. In fact, the range of elements in what is a 17-piece supergroup enables Parker to create mesmeric nuance as the songs reach explosive peaks.

The buzz and hiss of Roger Blank's balafong in the midst of the swells of brass bring an entrancing lightness to the freewheeling density of the horns and reeds, and blends effectively with a string section that features the late, great Billy Bang. Yet it is the compelling Leena Conquest, a vastly underrated figure in the pantheon of jazz vocal, who in many ways emerges as the kind of centrifugal force of the recording because she has the tonal strength to hold her own in the ensemble and commands attention while soloing. When she calls out America as 'a stolen land inhabited by murderers and politicians' she delivers the stark, unfiltered truth that is also part of the concept of universal tonality, in which players breathe and sing as one. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Steve Smith and Vital Information
The Complete Columbia Recordings

Wounded Bird Records WOU9999 (4 CD)

★★★

Steve Smith (d, perc, p, synth, v), Dave Wilczewski (ts, as, ss), Tom Coster, Jay Oliver, Kit Walker (ky), Mike Stern, Eef Albers, Torsten de Winkel, Barry Finnerty, Frank Gambale, Corrado Rustici, Ray Gomez, Jeff Richman (g), Dean Brown (g), (p), Kai Eckhardt-Karpeh, Tim Landers (b), Lenny Castro, Mike Fisher, Andy Narell, Kwaku Daddy, Armando Peraza, Brad Dutz (perc), Prince Joni Haastrup and Vladimir Johnson (v). Rec. 1983-1988

Smith could hardly have predicted the longevity of Vital Information when Columbia signed him as a solo artist after he'd hauled in the pop dollars for them with Journey. A no-frills package (although there are a couple of 'bonus' tracks Smith discovered while pulling together the project), this release includes the eponymous debut plus *Orion*, *Global Beat* and *Fiafiaga*. Fans may have these releases, and newbies may prefer Smith's later explorations of the bop tradition entwined with his fascination for *konnakol* rhythms. That said, both *Global Beat*, in its range of percussions, from Narell's steel pans, to talking drums and congas, and likewise *Fiafiaga*, flirt with world rhythms.

But the rock home base for these early outings couldn't be more explicit than on VI's debut with Stern and Brown laying down spectacularly OTT solos that may re-organise your molecular structure. Wilczewski's Breckerish sax leavens the twin guitar attack on *Orion*, although there's a mellower, more radio friendly, pop-funk feel to *Global Beat*, as well those more varied rhythms. But none of this really preps you for the wider jazzish world Smith and his pals would explore later.

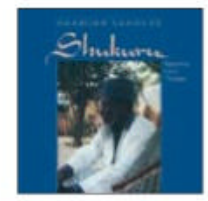
Andy Robson

Pharoah Sanders
Shukuru

Theresa/Pure Pleasure TR121 (LP)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Pharoah Sanders (ts, v), Leon Thomas (v), William Henderson (p, ky), Ray Drummond (b) and Idris Muhammad (d). Rec. 1981



The recent passing of Pharoah Sanders may make the sound of his music poignant right now but this somewhat overlooked release from his vast discography makes the important point that 'the son of Trane' also made an ecstatically joyful noise on many an occasion.

Cut in 1981, *Shukuru* reunites him with vocalist Leon Thomas, a key contributor to many of the saxophonist's seminal 1970s works, but rather than go into spiritual mode they get dancefloor-friendly on tracks like the bustling calypso 'Mas In Brooklyn (Highlife)' and swing sensually on 'Jitu'.

That said, there is far mellower material elsewhere, which is an effective reminder of Pharoah's sensitive side, as is heard on a fine reading of 'Body And Soul.' While an A-list acoustic quartet performs well, the sound of Bill Henderson's synthesizer is an interesting electric departure.

The Kurzweil 250 brings a degree of string-like softness to the ensemble sound, which may be off-putting to whoever wants to hear the swish of real violins and violas, but there is nonetheless a certain charm in those wafery chords that would not be at all unbecoming for those of us who came to jazz by way of 1980s soul in which electronics featured prominently. Because of the size of Pharoah's catalogue it is easy to dismiss some recordings as 'lesser' but *Shukuru* is one from a relatively un-championed period in his career that stands up far better than many may have thought.

Kevin Le Gendre

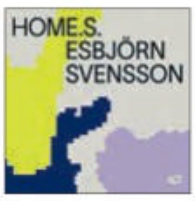
Pharoah Sanders

Esbjörn Svensson
Home. S.

ACT Music 9053 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Esbjorn Svensson (p). Rec. 2008



In August 2004, I was in Stockholm to witness e.s.t. record their album *Viaticum*. I arrived at the recording studio early, about 8am, and Svensson was at the piano, his back to the control room, playing a piece from Dimitri Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues* whose intensity and sheer density of notes was overwhelming. He then switched to 'Eighty-Eight Days in My Veins.' Laid back, relaxed and unhurried, this was the quintessential e.s.t., and, as it turned out, a song he would record later that day for the album. The transition was so complete it was as if someone had abruptly changed channels on DAB radio. When asked if we were ever going to hear the kind of technique he unleashed on Shostakovich he said, "No, that's not me, not the way I play, I play that to get my fingers moving."

It was a salutary lesson in self-editing. Svensson had developed a piano style that was uniquely his own; a reflection of who he was. The fact that he had the technical ability to dazzle audiences was irrelevant as it was not the kind of pianist he wanted to be. *Home.S.* places this episode in perspective.

Effectively a collection of nine solo preludes in the Chopin-esque meaning of the word – self-contained compositions that each convey a specific idea or emotion. There's a wide-awake lucidity about this music in the way it spurns complexity, is diatonic in places, with melodic development central to its meaning. Svensson's concern with the latter is such that there are moments where he seems interested in pursuing the direction each piece simply to see where it might lead him using sequential development, inversion, extension, truncation, and even repetition.

Whether these preludes are future compositions, or ideas to be developed with the trio, or are for an intended solo album, we don't know. But throughout these recordings, there is a humbleness and unpretentiousness in creation that gives them a profundity that would be swallowed-up by bravura technique. Even now, 15 years since his passing, these recently discovered gems are clearly the product of an astute musical mind. **Stuart Nicholson**

Various Artists
John Sinclair Presents Detroit Artists Workshop: Community, Jazz and Art in the Motor City 1965–81

Strut Records Strut 159 (CD, 2 LP, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Artists incl Yusef Lateef, Donald Byrd, Detroit Contemporary 4, Bennie Maupin Quartet, Ron English, Teddy Harris, Lyman Woodard Organization. Rec. 1965-81

Hard to find music made by African-American improvisers for independent labels, from Black Jazz to Strata-East to Tribe, has had a growing audience for some years now, and this compilation that shines a spotlight on 'hidden Detroit' is very timely.

Seedbed of modern soul, the Motor Town also has a great jazz heritage and this excellent anthology celebrates that by placing several lesser known members of the scene next to those who achieved national and international fame.

The fact that these are live performances at local venues such as the Paradise Theatre Orchestra Hall and Community Arts Auditorium of Wayne State University, spread out over a 15 year period, from the mid-1960s to the early 80s, gives a very clear sense of the historical importance of the recordings.

All told, they help to map out the compelling evolution of the post-bop age to the era in which spiritual jazz and fusion, leaning to funk and proto-electro grooves, all came to prominence. Well known anthems by such as trumpeter Donald Byrd ('Cristo Redentor') and Bennie Maupin ('Water Torture') sound just as vital here as they do on studio sets, but the music of more obscure names such as Detroit Contemporary 4, Ron English and Teddy Harris is also a revelation. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Byron Wallen
Black Flag

Twilight Jaguar Productions/Bandcamp (CD/book) ★★★

Byron Wallen (t) and Nick Ramm (ky). Rec: 2004

The polymathic UK trumpeter and composer Byron Wallen has been walking a creative line between classic-jazz virtuosity and global conceptual adventurousness since the mid-1990s - with a succession of bold projects that have included his *Tarot Suite*, the MOBO Award-nominated *Earth Roots*, and the jazz/poetry venture dedicated to Langston Hughes that helped win him a British Jazz Innovation Award in 2003.

But Wallen's *Black Flag*, an album of rich-textured trumpet/keys duo playing with pianist Nick Ramm, packaged with an autobiographical book of images on the theme of family, is up there with the inventiveness of all his work.

Wallen was born and raised in the UK but his parents were from Belize, and a childhood of intimate relationships split by the Atlantic Ocean is movingly evoked in these pictures – as the music is steeped in his observations and feelings from years of travelling and playing all over Africa, the Caribbean, and the East. The CD's 18 short pieces, originally commissioned by the Jerwood Foundation and recorded in 2004 but recently remixed, cover a vivid landscape of styles and sounds, from the Miles-like lyricism of Wallen's trumpet against Ramm's loops, orchestra-mimicking chords and glistening Rhodes tones, to brass fanfares segueing into jigging dances, or effects suggesting church bells, rolling waves, airport announcements, or distant trains.

The inventive Ramm sometimes cranks up hurried, boogie-like piano grooves, or crunching, Weather Reportish bass-note vamps, and the long rapport between him and the freethinking and ever-curious Byron Wallen is evident everywhere.

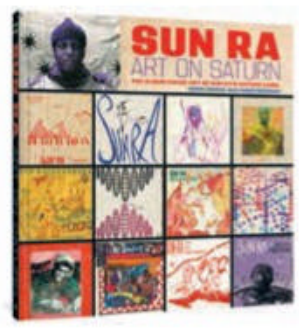
John Fordham

Esbjörn Svensson

Sun Ra Art On Saturn: The Album Cover Art of Sun Ra's Saturn label

Irwin Chusid and Chris Reisman

Fantagraphics HB $75.00



While there have been numerous books and articles written about Sun Ra and his interplanetary musical vision, few have focused on the visual aspect of his work. Notable exceptions in this field include John Corbett's *Sun Ra + Ayé Aton: Space, Interiors and Exteriors*, 1972 (Picture Box/Corbett Vs Dempsey, 2013); his P*athways to Unknown Worlds: Sun Ra, El Saturn and Chicago's Afro-Futurist Underground 1954-68* (Whitewalls, 2006) exhibition catalogue; and the latest edition of Hartmut Geerken and Chris Trent's *Omniverse Sun Ra* (Art Yard, 2015), a personalised devotion to the man, his music and his art, complete with Trent's meticulously detailed (and possibly definitive) discography.

Now comes this heavyweight volume solely dedicated to showcasing a collection of record cover and label artwork that Sun Ra and his Arkestra produced during their time together on Planet Earth. Compiled by Irwin Chusid (the current curator of Sun Ra's artist's estate) together with discographer Chris Reisman, this epic tome gathers together a mind-blowing selection of El Saturn cover art that has been plucked from various serious Ra collections and crammed together under hard covers. Together with an introductory essay by Chusid and John Corbett's reprinted essay 'An Afro-Space-Jazz Imaginary: The Printed Record of Sun Ra and El Saturn', the book's most revealing testimony comes from guitarist, collector and former record dealer Glenn Jones – whose first-hand experiences of buying Sun Ra product from Arkestra member Danny Ray Thompson (and later from Alton Abraham who ran the Chicago branch of Saturn) makes for illuminating reading. Jones recounts how, after first making contact with Thompson, a deal was eventually struck with Sun Ra and the first batch of records were handed over at Boston Airport for a bulging envelope of cash. These transactions carried on for several years, a period where Jones managed to distribute various LPs, 45s, cassettes and Ra's poetry book, *The Immeasurable Equation*. He also recounts the excitement felt when opening the box of records he had received from El Saturn HQ: "It was like Christmas!", he writes. "The top 10 or 20 albums in each box were elaborately hand-decorated; some were colored with markers; others were embellished, collage style, with bits of metallic paper and snapshots; the so-called shower curtain covers featured 8 x 10 glossy photos sealed under sheets of clear patterned plastic."

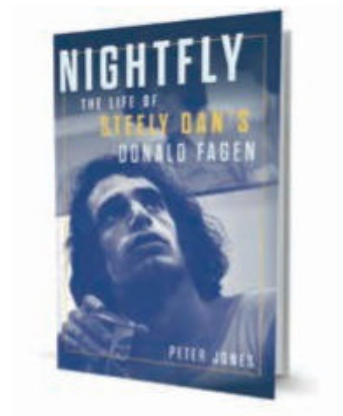
Jones also reveals that in one of these latter covers (now in his personal collection) is preserved a beard hair from an anonymous band member – a discovery akin to finding an insect in a prehistoric nugget of amber.

The same thrill of excitement and wonder that Jones experienced when opening up his box of Saturns can be replicated by digging deep into this sumptuously-illustrated book. Here the early mass-produced printed covers are gathered together with their futuristic images of rocket ships, colliding planets and strange strings. This is followed up by a huge selection of the handmade covers, each a singular work of art using such mediums as marker pens, collage, photos, Xeroxed drawings and the aforementioned shower curtain plastic, a device that gave the image beneath a three-dimensional lenticular look. Equally important to the process were the record labels. Xeroxed, hand coloured, roughly cut out and glued on to the finished records, they are an intrinsic part of what made Sun Ra's records special, magical and now highly sought-after. More than decoration, the covers and other art that Sun Ra produced during this period are a portal that allows the reader of this important book an access-all-areas pass into his ever morphing world. For those searching out the true meaning behind Sun Ra's unique music and ideas, this book could prove to be just the ticket. **Edwin Pouncey**

Nightfly: The Life of Steely Dan's Donald Fagen

Peter Jones

Chicago Review Press HB £28.99



It's a brave man who plumbs the depths (and highs) of Donald Fagen's musical and personal life. Few artists are so well documented, especially via Steely Dan's fan sites. Yet all that murmuration only adds to his mystique, especially round those oh-so-curious lyrics. It's an image, of the hyper-cool night-time DJ, unloved and lonely, that Fagen nurtured himself with his 1983 solo release *The Nightfly*, and it's a carapace few have snuck behind. But Jones gets as close as any. Although Fagen's own memoir *Eminent Hipsters* remains the place to start for those fascinated with the icon, man and music.

You could observe that Jones is hampered by Fagen making no contribution to the book. And there are few interviews with those close (or indeed estranged) from Fagen. Yet this also frees Jones to question Fagen, especially around Steely Dan's repeated lyrics of lust for younger women. But to Jones' credit, he refuses to be seduced by the more bizarre interpretations of the Dan's work. Nor is he judgemental about how litigious Fagen grew toward former collaborators (including Walter Becker's estate), or his 'stormy' relationships with those close to him. Instead Jones' intent, as he describes it, is to write a 'critical biography'. *Nightfly* is a fair, very readable analysis of how Fagen and Becker's art was born, grew, flourished and has entered the pantheon of the best of popular rock, spiced with a twist of jazz.

Jones, as a performer himself, and the biographer of great jazz vocalists (and complex characters) like Mark Murphy and Jon Hendricks, is well-placed to explore Fagen's jazz leanings. There's some attempt to position Fagen as a loner in a bourgeois family that didn't 'get' his interests. But Fagen was indulged, allowed to practice the piano to all hours (as long as his sister wasn't disturbed) in the styles of his teen heroes Red Garland, Wynton Kelly and Duke. Far from coming from a family of suburban dorks, scions of the Fagen family were decidedly hip. Cousin Sara even dated Miles Davis. Jones subtly traces these jazz elements through the albums, not simply the overt influences, like 'Rikki Don't Lose That Number's' 'relationship' to Horace Silver's 'Song for my Father', or just because the Dan regularly employed jazzers like Shorter and Victor Feldman. Jones identifies that Fagen (as he himself readily confessed) was influenced by Ellington's ethos: the need for control, of writing for certain voices, the competitiveness, the passion for detail combined with a sure ear for a melody: all these Ellingtonian qualities inform Fagen profoundly.

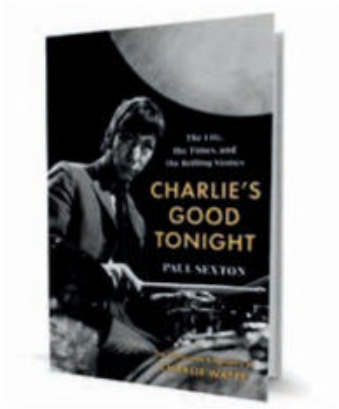
Jones also draws out Fagen's relationship to his Jewish heritage and the contribution of Jewish composers 'from Berlin to Randy Newman', but most vitally Bob Dylan, to American music. Whether you believe Fagen and Becker were the Gershwins of the 1970s, or Jones' assertion that Fagen has 'earned his place' alongside Milhaud and Glass, it all adds up to a damn good read: especially at night, alone, with the radio on and the cigarette smoke curling... **Andy Robson**

Books

Charlie's Good Tonight: The Authorised Biography of Charlie Watts

Paul Sexton

Mudlark/Harper Collins HB £25



For a self-taught drummer who barely rated himself, yet who was held dear by rock and jazz musicians worldwide, Charlie Watts had a love/hate relationship with his day job, the Rolling Stones, preferring the world of his numerous jazz ensembles and his home life in Devon.

"I've tried to resign after every tour since 1969, but each time they talk me back into it" observed the rather private, dapper gentleman who regularly traversed the globe at the heart of the biggest touring band for almost 60 years. Charlie was a one-off, and this quirky, though never less than compelling dichotomy underpins much of this intimate biography, arriving a year after his death in August 2021, age 80.

The book's 'authorised' status affords much-coveted access to band members (including forewords by both Mick Jagger and Keith Richards), producers, long-time friends such as jazz bassist Dave Green, and family members, though not Charlie's wife, Shirley. However, it also means that author Sexton, who has done promotional interview duties for the Stones since 1991, avoids diving *too* deep into the band's infamous, storied past.

From growing up in a war-time prefab next door to Dave Green in Wembley, much of the early detail here is provided by the bassist and a rare interview with Charlie's sister Linda, who reveals encouragement from their uncle Lennie Peters (who was in the Migil Five and pop duo Peters and Lee). After hearing Charlie Parker's 'Out of Nowhere' ("I am what I am, thanks to this man") and Chico Hamilton's drums on Gerry Mulligan's 'Walkin' Shoes', the die was cast. Sexton provides new insights into his early years: from joining the Joe Jones Seven to Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated; a stint with Dudley Moore's Trio; buying jazz LPs from Ray Smith at Collet's; and working as a graphic designer by day before being headhunted by the Stones in late 1962.

Throughout, Sexton balances Watts' wry insights into his personal life and Stones career – from lingering self-doubt, OCD tendencies, insomnia on tour to his brief mid-life dalliance with heroin – with generous praise and love from bandmates and producers for his unique contribution to the band's music and success. And the gig paid well too, enabling him to own numerous properties, run a high-end stud farm with Shirley, acquire a huge collection of antiques and jazz memorabilia – including Armstrong and Parker items and drum kits belonging to Max Roach, Sonny Greer and 'Big' Sid Catlett – and a vintage car collection, even though he couldn't drive.

My only reservation is the thin coverage given to Charlie's post mid-1980s jazz ensembles, which *Variety* described as "the most successful Stones solo projects". These took in eight albums and numerous dates: the 1985-6 Jazz Orchestra (including Stan Tracey, Bobby Wellins, Courtney Pine, Evan Parker *et al*); his 1990s quintet with saxophonist Peter King (who Sexton mixes up with Ronnie Scott's co-partner Pete King); to the Tentet band and concert with the Danish Radio Big Band.

In a number of conversations I had with Charlie it was clear he cared deeply about UK jazz musicians and was a facilitator and advocate of their music. It would have been good to see more pages devoted to this key aspect of his remarkable life.

Jon Newey

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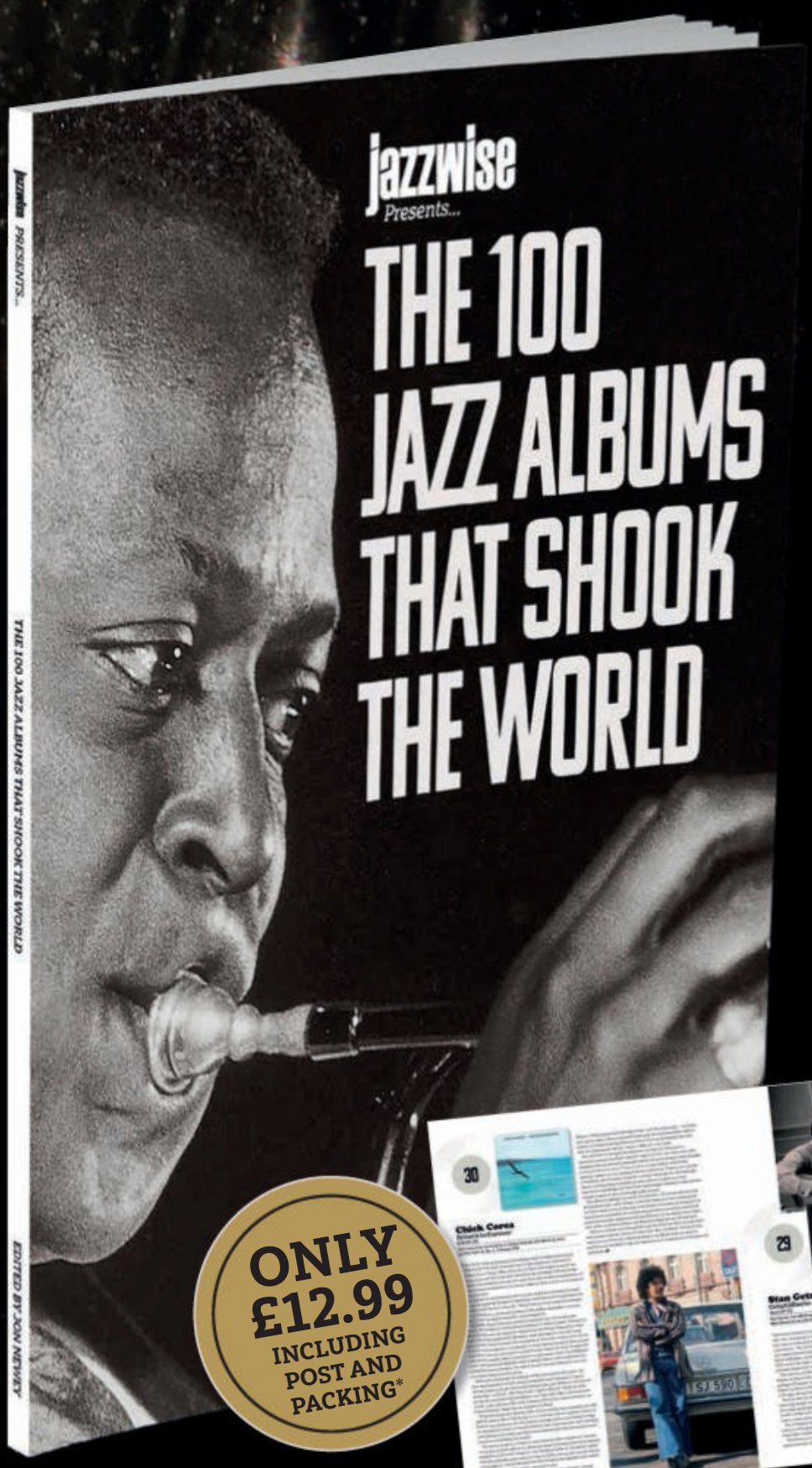

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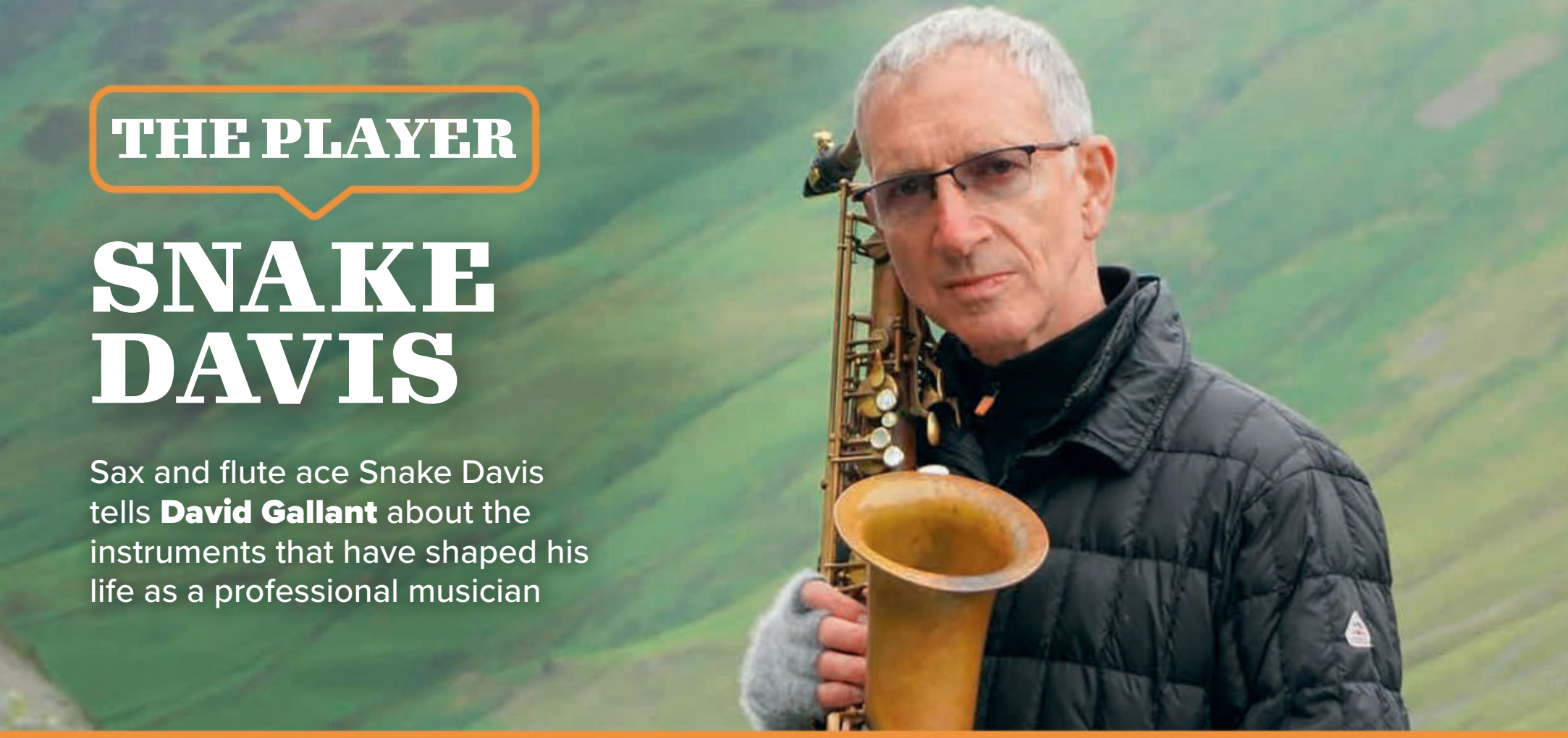
THE PLAYER

SNAKE DAVIS

Sax and flute ace Snake Davis tells **David Gallant** about the instruments that have shaped his life as a professional musician



"I was a good boy soprano," starts Davis, "and got most of the solos. But once the voice broke, I thought that was all over. One theory of mine, formed decades after the event, is that I fell so in love with the sax because it 'gave me my voice back'." Davis elucidates. "The sax has such beautiful opportunities for expressing the emotions and conveying the passion of the player. I was, and still am a soul boy. I grew up dancing to Motown, Stax, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin... Sax-wise King Curtis is the ultimate. Then Junior Walker, Maceo Parker, Tom Scott..."

Davis emphasises that singing was the catalyst. "Singing is what first gave me the 'special tingle' for music. My primary school teacher, Mrs Thomas, at Glasllwych school in Newport, was the most influential teacher in my life. I still recall standing beside the piano as she accompanied me for solos such as 'Under the Linden Tree'. I was praised as a boy soprano soloist and sang in Eisteddfods."

From the age of nine Davis had piano lessons "for around two years. I didn't love it, didn't hate it. It was the usual 'Für Elise' and loads of scales. I don't think I did any grades. I think I did Grade 5 then Grade 8 on flute, but that was to get me into Leeds College of Music.

"Although it was initially my love of soul music that brought me to the saxophone, it was through playing the saxophone that I developed a love and appreciation for jazz, the music itself and great players such as Coltrane, Parker, Brecker and many more. My first teacher advised me to go out and buy records by the great altoist Cannonball Adderley. His playing blew my mind and I listen to him often to this day."

Davis' first sax was a secondhand Conn 'underslung' alto. He recalls the event: "It was 1974. I hitch-hiked to London, and visited one of the music shops in Shaftesbury Avenue. I really wanted a tenor sax. I was a soul boy and that was the sound I loved. But in the shop tenors looked so big and intimidating, so I came out with an alto!

"It took me another year to save up for a tenor sax, an old Conn 10 M. In about 1977 I hitch-hiked South again to make a private purchase of the legendary 1950s Selmer Mk V1 tenor sax for £250. After my first 'pro-gig' on Cunard cruise liners around 1985, I bought new horns for the first time, a Yamaha alto and soprano." Davis continues: "Over the next few years as my passion grew and I started gigging more, I grew the family with a Conn curved soprano and Conn X-Bar baritone. I decided to sell the Yamahas and bought a Selmer Mk V1 alto. Through the 1980s and 90s I bought and sold a string of Mk V1s in the fruitless and misguided search for 'the 'ultimate one'. During my time on the cruise ships, and against my better judgement, I also purchased a cheap secondhand Boosey and Hawkes clarinet. I already played a lot of flute and appreciated the beauty of the clarinet in the right hands, but ultimately felt that mine weren't those hands."

> ***"I was a soul boy, so I wanted a tenor sax. But they were so big I ended up with an alto!"***

Davis tells me that he has given the instrument away twice, "but each time it has bounced back like a bad penny. The second time was after my niece had tried it for a year or so. My sister-in-law had run over it in the car, so it arrived back to me with the box completely crumpled and broken. But unfortunately the instrument was undamaged!"

Today Davis' saxes are all made by Yanagisawa.

"Up until about 20 years ago I played vintage instruments exclusively, but somebody persuaded me to try a Yanagisawa curved soprano sax. I fell in love with it and then gradually changed to the company's alto, tenor and baritone. For build quality, feel and sound, they have it all."

When it comes to mouthpieces, Davis uses RPC hard rubber together with Silverstein ligatures: "I look for a fairly 'neutral' mouthpiece and steer clear of anything claiming to 'add top' or 'give extra cut'. Sadly the RPC is no longer available, as the maker has passed away."

Davis says that reed choice is tricky and fraught, and invariably comes down to the personal preference of the individual player. "I use D'Addario Select Jazz and D'Addario Venn synthetic. The Legere 'American Cut' synthetic reed is a great product too, and I have some of those as back-up. Reed strength is 2M on soprano, 2H on alto, 3S on tenor and 3M on baritone, with a half or more size down for synthetic reeds."

The flute has clearly been close to Davis' heart for many years, and he is keen to make mention of them before we close. "I have a Flute-makers Guild open-hole concert flute with Mike Allen and Flute-makers of Australia heads, I also have an Armstrong alto flute with a Mike Allen lip plate. And over the years I have collected a large array of wooden flutes from Japan, India, and China, and a large collection of whistles, including some wooden ones by master flute and whistle maker Willie Simmons."

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Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant rounds up the latest music tech and instruments for professional and serious semi-professional musicians

Ibanez GB10SEFM George Benson Custom model

It seems that 2022 has been a year for limited editions and custom models. We missed the launch of this new addition to the ever-popular Ibanez semi-acoustic line when it arrived earlier this year with its bright sapphire red facelift along with a few choice upgrades.

Sporting flamed maple back, sides and top, complemented by a strong three-piece maple neck, it has all the characteristic sonic clarity and resonance that players have come to expect from this particular instrument. The bound ebony fretboard with its 22 medium Artstar finished frets adds to the guitar's quick response and rich, extended sustain. This is further enhanced by the addition of a 43mm bone/brass nut and an adjustable floating ebony bridge. Added to this, the beautifully shaped, staggered GB10 tailpiece provides for a much-improved tuning stability.

Perhaps the most distinctive features of this custom model are however the two GB special passive alnico pickups that float off the body to give the instrument a distinctively warm jazz sound. The remainder of the electronic hardware is relatively standard with a three-way switch set to the upper front bout, together with the usual tone and volume control knobs on the lower rear bout.

Fitted with a set of 11s, the GB10SEFM comes with its very own plush lined, fitted hard shell case and carries an SRP of £1,559.

www.ibanez.com

JodyJazz HH Limited Edition Tenor Saxophone Mouthpiece

The recently released JodyJazz HH (hand-hammered) tenor saxophone mouthpiece is a world's first. Jody Espina, the president, and founder of JodyJazz comments: "Hammering the brass compresses it and makes it stronger. The harder the material, the easier it rings out and sustains. You need less energy to get it to resonate than a softer, un-hammered piece of brass. Hammering the bell brass blanks also results in mouthpieces with uniquely warm and complex tonal characteristics." In order to enhance this unique tonal characteristic and response of the hammered brass, JodyJazz has also developed an all-new internal design and facing curve with a round chamber and straight side walls. "Everyone who has played the mouthpiece," says Espina, "tells us that the hammering delivers a truly unique combination of warm, sweet sound with power and fullness." The HH Tenor models feature another design innovation which JodyJazz is calling the 'Patch Bay'. This is a recessed, shallow basin in the beak of the mouthpiece that allows for the easy and comfortable placement of a clear protector patch. JodyJazz will be shipping the new HH Tenor mouthpiece with one of their 'Perfect Patch' mouthpiece cushions already affixed in the patch bay with another larger clear patch over the top. Available in 6*, 7*, 8* and 9* tip openings, the limited edition run in Rose Gold finish is 300pcs. JodyJazz is also making available, for purchase separately, a matching hand-hammered POWER RING Ligature, also in Rose Gold.

www.jodyjazz.com

Joe Doe Toggle Switch Surrounds

We just had to mention this! These quirky toggle switch surrounds from Joe Doe brought a smile to the office face. Ever one for bringing new and original designs to the market, this is one of those that begs the question: why didn't anyone think of this before? Mimicking poker chips, these toggle switch surrounds come in either aged black with gold lettering or aged white with black lettering. Options include Dazed/Confused and BlaBla/Lalala. A perfect Christmas stocking-filler from the long-suffering partner of a jazz guitarist!

www.jhs.co.uk

Kawai ES120 Digital Piano

Coming in a stylish black and white finish, the ES120 is the latest addition to Kawai's ES range of high specification portable, digital pianos. The ES120 features a brand-new exterior design, with the instrument's updated control panel incorporated into an attractive polished trim that runs the length of the keyboard. It's body weighs just 12 kg, making the ES120 an excellent choice for the gigging musician. This new 2022 model features an improved version of the 'Responsive Hammer Compact' keyboard action, with upgraded cushioning material that helps to reduce action noise when keys are released. The ES120's core acoustic piano sounds have also been refreshed with the most affordable ES instrument now including the latest Shigeru Kawai SK-EX samples, while still retaining the existing Kawai EX concert grand piano sounds from the previous generation ES110 model. In addition, the ES120 also features a selection of new electronic piano, strings, and bass sounds from the larger ES520, and even includes a real upright piano sound, providing a strong variety of useful sounds for any musical occasion. In addition to USB-MIDI and Bluetooth MIDI, the ES120 now also includes Bluetooth Audio connectivity, allowing audio from smart phones/tablets to be played through the instrument's speakers wirelessly, or via the standard 1/4" Line Out connectors. As with the ES920 and ES520 portable pianos, the ES120 supports Kawai's latest PianoRemote and PiaBookPlayer apps, allowing sounds and settings to be selected from a compatible iOS or Android device.

As with its predecessor, the ES120 can be transformed into an ultra-compact home piano replacement using the dedicated stand and triple pedal accessories.

www.kawai.com

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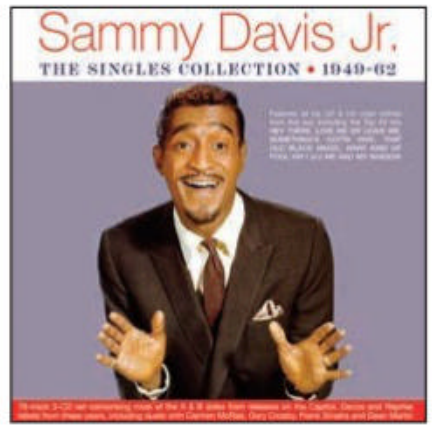

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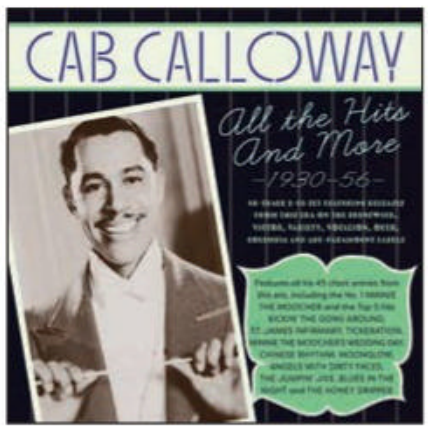

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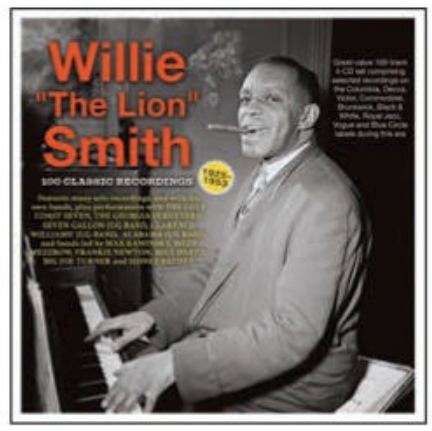

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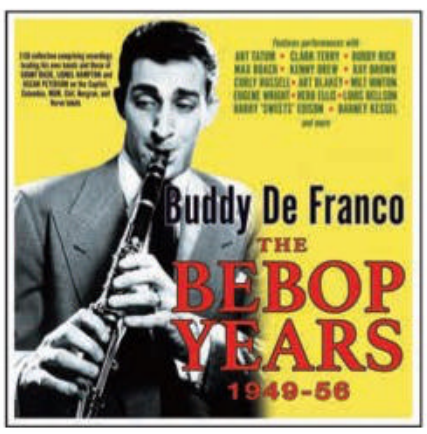

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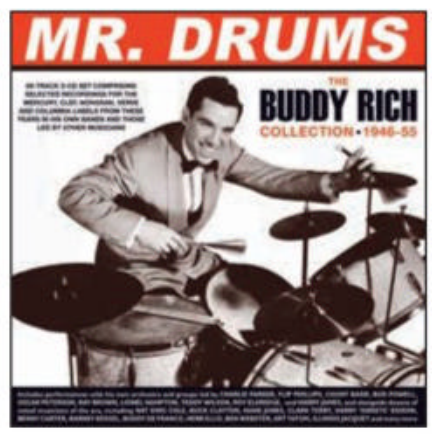

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Guy Barker conducts the BBC Concert Orchestra, with guest vocalist Allan Harris and featured soloist Lakecia Benjamin

Photo: Mark Allan/BBC

Live Reviews

Lakecia Benjamin, Allan Harris, Guy Barker and the BBC Concert Orchestra

Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

Nothing could be more fitting for the centenary of Charles Mingus than a stage crammed full of musicians. The bassist-bandleader-composer was able to make a small group sound like a big band, so the sight of the BBC Concert Orchestra, a 14-piece UK jazz ensemble and star US soloists, alto saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin and vocalist-narrator Allan Harris, is a literal supersizing of the legend's own way of drawing more from less. Conductor-arranger Guy Barker cleverly presents new scores not just of some of the songs that saw Mingus help to define the modern jazz era of the late 1950s and early 60s, but also of the music borne of his excellent collaborations.

Money Jungle was the timeless album Mingus made with his idol, Duke Ellington, and Max Roach, and one of its highlights, 'Fleurette Africaine' is given a fine rendition, as is the other Dukish anthem 'Caravan.' On both Benjamin dominates with rakishly aggressive improvisations in which her quickfire trilling and whirling rhythmic figures are matched by clear articulation and focused dynamics.

The second set is about words and music, which is fitting given the prevalence of spoken word in Mingus' songbook. Harris recounts what are really scenes from the artist's life written by Robert Ryan, and the result is a suite built around a number of key works, notably 'Boogie Stop Shuffle', 'Moanin' and 'Better Get Hit In Your Soul'. Harris brings the finesse of a Nat 'King' Cole to the melodies he handles, but it is really his relaxed yet vivid storytelling, full of wry, dark humour and tragic reality checks on racism that excels. When he evokes the swastika of 'Fables Of Faubus' it is impossible not to connect Mingus' centenary with Italy's lurch to the Far Right while the atomic bomb the bassist feared still hasn't been defused. Oh Lord, don't let them drop it on us now.

Kevin Le Gendre

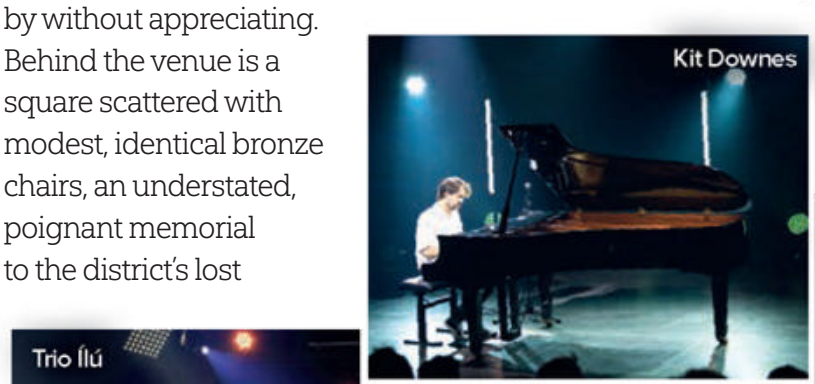
Jazz Juniors

Kraków, Poland

Jazz Juniors has been platforming talent from Poland and beyond for over four decades, combining competition and community in a four-day festival held in Kraków's Cricoteka, an arts complex and museum built in tribute to painter Tadeusz Kantor. History is all around the city, be it the ancient Stare Miasto, or more subtle monuments you might easily pass by without appreciating. Behind the venue is a square scattered with modest, identical bronze chairs, an understated, poignant memorial to the district's lost Jewish population.

With a tech budget most UK jazz festivals could only dream of, Jazz Juniors is slick and bold in equal measure. The main draw for young musicians is its first night, which promises invitations to a range of European festivals alongside its prize fund. Young bands from the UK looking to spread their wings should seriously consider entering.

Two groups who stuck to more traditional ideas of finding freedom by breaking out of established structures shared the top spot: Trio Ílú, a sax-bass-congas combo in the Rollins mould (featuring saxophonist Joaquin Sosa, a worthy winner of the night's special prize), and quartet Ziemia with strong internal communication and cautious 'out' moments. Special mention too for a pair of wildly different bands – psych-jazz outfit Tantfreaky from Warsaw, with shades of Alabaster de Plume's drones overlayed with delay-heavy sax, and duo Jopek Klemensiewicz's minimal piano arpeggios and fluttering soprano lines drawing from Polish folk and ambient classical music – who took home 2nd and 3rd prize respectively.



Kit Downes

Trio Ílú

Tantfreaky

Photos Michał Łepecki/Jazz Juniors

The remainder of the festival was dedicated to chamber jazz, with a pleasing variety of improvising traditions on show. Amsterdam's Reinier Baas and Ben Van Gelder opened with their brand of mellow fireworks, via a fruity spin on Thelonious Monk tune 'Work'. Trilok Gurtu followed with a fiery solo percussion set, moving swiftly from playing a massively augmented drumkit to tabla to cymbals dunked in a bucket of water, finally ending up on cajón. Gurtu certainly carried the biggest stage presence of the festival, with a dramatic potency to his konnakol sections and a Bobby McFerrin-esque audience participation finale.

Altoist Tim Berne's soundworld of stretched lines and vertical outbursts is well-established, but this was Berne at his most mellow, complemented by the thoughtful pair of Hank Roberts and Gregg Belisle-Chi. Mellowness also marked Kit Downes' solo piano set, an hour of intimately rendered originals, folk tunes from Hungary and Scotland and a welcome reference to America via the Skip James tune 'Hard Time Killin' Floor Blues', all executed with impressive clarity. Downes balanced the angular, intensely chromatic compositions heard in a first half from Ziółek Quartet, dominated by pianist Grzegorz Ziółek's Messiaenic shapes. Artur Małecki and Bartłomiej Leśniak, a warm-up for Berne the previous night, were similarly intense, but more adventurous in their structural escape acts.

The only sticking point on an exciting four days of music was representation. With just two women featuring on the entire programme, and zero booked for the main segment, it's an immediate area for improvement programme-wise. With such changes, Jazz Juniors will hopefully go from strength to strength as it approaches its 50th year. **Hugh Morris**

Brighton Jazz Festival

Brighton, East Sussex

Four days and sold-out nights: the Brighton Jazz Festival boasted highlights aplenty and in eagerly awaited Saturday night headliner Keyon Harrold a significant coup, the trumpeter hitting the stage stony-faced behind dark glasses over which he sneakily peaked at a crowd agog for what the Grammy-winner from Ferguson, Missouri had in store. From the first peals of 'Foreverland' we knew we were in for a special night far surpassing the studio recordings. Rapturous reception broke the ice and Harrold's sunnier side flooded out, drolly but feelingly reflecting on life and music.

Lee Morgan's 'Stop Start' paid fulsome tribute, the gorgeously plangent ballad 'Stay This Way' built to an epic dimension reminiscent of David Bowie's final recordings. Quoting 'My Favourite Things', 'Her Beauty Through My Eyes' unveiled the trumpeter's yearning singing voice after a sumptuous, thrilling piano passage; as McCoy Tyner was to Coltrane, so too Jahari Stampley's lush romanticism is to Keyon Harrold. These beautiful compositions are richly emotive, torrentially propulsive and yet lonesome at heart, the horn in the heart of the action the outsider longing to belong, to connect.

On the first of a brace of recreated canonical classics, a sizzling NYJO 10-piece under Tony Kofi with the outstanding pianist Matt Jacobs and tenorist Emma Rawicz honoured both spirit and letter of the 1959 Thelonious Monk Orchestra show at Town Hall, and on the second Gary Crosby and band celebrated a titan's centenary by rebooting 1973's *Mingus Moves* with house-party fervour.

Earlier, a matching pair of Julian Nicholas showcases: his own band paired him with singer Imogen Ryall in a delightful courtship display of billing, cooing and tail-fanning, then he played with The Changyng Same with *Jazzwise* co-founder Jon Newey on congas, a jazz-rockingly promising powerhouse unit. A storm-lashed Friday night rolled back the rug as an avid young crowd hit the dancefloor for London trumpet rising star Ife Ogunjobi's anxiously adrenalised swagger morphing from jazz to Afrobeat. Following that, fellow Londoners Pyjaen combined art school mentality with music school chops in a firework display of tuneful cartoonery, Daniel Gray's trumpet and Ben Vize's tenor a thrilling blaze.

Photos: Lisa Wormsley

Sunday night's summit of two young British tenorists showcased their expanding range. Basing his set on *Dream Like a Dogwood Wild Boy*, Binker Golding exhilaratingly spliced muscular Rollins-style post-bop with the ear-friendly Americana fusion Pat Metheny pioneered with Michael Brecker on *80/81*.

Hot on the tail of The Comet Is Coming, Chelsea Carmichael's mighty roar reverberated around the metallic cosmic cavern conjured by effects-heavy electric guitarist Nikos Ziarkas, both spiritually transcendent and straight out of a CGI multiverse. Enraptured, we're sent home along the pier with the starlit seafront stretched out before us. Sheer magic.

Mat Snow

Shane Forbes Quintet,

606 Club, London

Shane Forbes first explored the music of Blossom Dearie at last year's London Jazz Festival. And if that wasn't enough of a treat, Forbes, with a rather different line up, has extended his voyage of discovery by embracing the songs of Shirley Horn.

The 606 is the perfect venue for such a gig. Intimate, welcoming, but never pretentious, it's a club that musicians and audiences alike love to visit: you can imagine Horn or Dearie themselves holding an audience in thrall here. The tone was set immediately by the opening 'They Say It's Spring'. Forbes has a lush swing that perfectly complements such come hither material, and indeed the quieter he plays the more it clarifies the precision and diamond detail of his playing.

He also sets up Alec Harper's horn perfectly; sometimes so hushed you can hear the pads tap, but always robust and certainly not sentimental, sometimes the focus of the whole evening circled in on the shine of the sax's bell. With Joe Webb indisposed, Will Barry took to the keys with ease, he has after all played with Forbes for years, especially in Forbes' boppish trio. Meanwhile supple guitarist David Archer had his moments in the spotlight, closing the first set with the bluesy 'The Party's Over'.

But the party's never really over with this band, especially given the propulsion provided by Tom Farmer's bass. Farmer and Forbes have been so joined at the hip over the decades it's hard to imagine one without the other, and when Farmer stepped up for his glow in the dark solo on 'Manhattan', time stood still.

There are some songs, like 'Manhattan', which Dearie so favoured, that somehow need the salt of the occasional clattered plate, of a knife scraping, of a whispered tryst at a shaded table, of a hand reaching out to another in the candlelight, of chocolate gateau being spooned to a lover [*Steady on – Ed*]. And in the semi dark of the club, such songs will always remain alive, sharp and subtle. And you know when Esther, so much more than 'bar' or 'waiting staff', sighs mid-solo, or sing-whispers a bar or so to herself, you know the heritage of Horn and Dearie is in good hands with Forbes and his crew.

Andy Robson

Gig Guide Dec 22/Jan 23

Rosie Hanley previews the must-see gigs and concerts. Send future listings to **roseanne.hanley@gmail.com**

All listings are run free but due to space restrictions cannot be guaranteed to appear – expanded gig listings can be found at **www.jazzwise.com/gig-guide**

Rob Luft, Rod Youngs and Dave O'Higgins play The Verdict, Brighton, 2 December
(Photo by Monika S. Jakubowska)

THURSDAY

1 Balazs Szaloky
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
1 Nao Yoshioka
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
1 Serpentine Fire
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
1 Scottish National Jazz Orchestra
Queen's Hall, Clerk Street, Edinburgh
1 Ian Shaw and Claire Martin
The Electric Theatre, Onslow Street, Guildford
1 Ingham and Davison Sextet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

FRIDAY

2 Dom Ingham Quintet
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield
2 Romarna Campbell
B:Music, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, 8 Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham
2 Alligator Gumbo
Saltburn Community Hall, Albion Terrace, Saltburn-by-Sea
2 Sam Jesson
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
2 Swing Manouche
Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Market Place, Bishop Auckland
2 Quartet Diminished
Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1
2 Scottish National Jazz Orchestra
Byre Theatre, Abbey Street, St Andrews
2 Dave O'Higgins and Rob Luft Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
2 Jamil Sheriff
JATP, Bradford Latvian Club, Bradford
2-3 Omar
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
2 Guy Chambers
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
2 Dom Pipkin
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
2 Rosie Frater-Taylor
Guildford Jazz, Boileroom, Stoke Fields, Guildford
2 Fergus McCreadie
Zefferillis, Compston Road, Ambleside
2 Niffi Osiyemi Trio
Vault, Hallgate, Hexham
2 Rory Ingham-James Davison Sextet
Sheffield Jazz, Crookes Social Club, Mulehouse Road, Sheffield
2 Siglo Section Funk Septet
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea

SATURDAY

3 Remi Harris and Tom Moore
Amble Parish Hall, Dovecot Street, Amble
3 Matt Carmichael
Perth Theatre, Mill Street, Perth
3 Jay Rayner
Crazy Coqs, 20 Sherwood Street, London W1
3 Tony Kofi
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
3 Charlotte Glasson Quintet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
3 Ant Law and Alex Hitchcock Quartet (evening), Down For The Count Orchestra (lunchtime)
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
3 Scottish National Jazz Orchestra
Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow
3 Jake Leg Jug Band
St Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington

SUNDAY

4 Wayne Hernandez
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
4 Let Spin
Bobik's, Punch Bowl, Jesmond Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne
4 Ronnie Scott's Blues Explosion
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
4 The London Vocal Project
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
4 Liane Carroll
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne
4 Gabriel Latchin Trio
Merchants House, West George Street, Glasgow
4 Remi Harris and Tom Moore
Bowes & Gilmonby Parish Hall, Bowes, Barnard Castle
4 Ian Shaw
The Brunswick, 1-3 Holland Road, Hove

MONDAY

5 Paul Edis Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
5-7 Motown and more
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
5 Jana Varga
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

6 Interphase
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
6 Rachel Sutton
The Pheasantry, 152/154 King's Road, London SW3
6 Ant Law and Alex Hitchcock Quartet
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
6 Sultan Stevenson Trio
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
6 Ian Shaw, Iain Ballamy and Jamie Safir
Fleet Jazz, The Harlington, 236 Fleet Road, Fleet

WEDNESDAY

7 Lauren Lucille
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
7 Bryan Corbett Quintet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
7 Derek Nash Acoustic Quartet
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester
7 Jamil Sheriff
Jazz at The Lescar, 303 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield
7 Antonio Forcione Solo
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
7 Dan Barker Bey
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

THURSDAY

8 Ian Shaw, Iain Ballamy and Jamie Safir
Cambridge Modern Jazz, The Gonville Hotel, Gonville Place, Cambridge
8 Purdy
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
8 Thom Whitworth
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

8 China Moses
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
8 Alina Bzhezhinska HipHarp Collective
Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick, Coventry
Harpist Alina Bzhezhinska leads her HipHarp Collective through her distinctive and innovative brand of experimental jazz and trip hop.
8 Birth of the Cool and Art Pepper Eleven
Milton Court Concert Hall, Guildhall, London EC2
8 Antonio Forcione Trio
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
8 Alan Barnes Octet
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea

FRIDAY

9 Mark Armstrong and National Youth Jazz Orchestra
Marylebone Theatre, 35 Park Road, London NW1
9 Emma Rawicz Duo
B:Music, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, 8 Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham
Saxophonist and composer Emma Rawicz lines up with highly-skilled and acclaimed pianist Ivo Neame for this special free duo gig.
9 Antonio Forcione Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
9 Greg Heath Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
9 Claire Moore and Jamie Safir
Crazy Coqs, 20 Sherwood Street, London W1
9 Jo Harrop and Paul Edis
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
9-10 James Taylor Quartet
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
9 Wakefield Jazz Christmas Party
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield

SATURDAY

10 Alan Barnes Octet
Newcastle Arts Centre, Westgate Road, Newcastle
10 Gabriel Latchin
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
10 Helen Gayle
Derby Jazz, Dubrek, 67 Bridge Street, Derby
10 Brandon Allen Groove Band
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY

11 Gabriele Pribetti Band
Off the Rails, One Kew Road, Richmond, London TW9
11 Dana Gillespie (evening) 606 Gospel Group Christmas Group (lunchtime)
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
11 W3 Funk Sessions
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
11 Jason Isaacs
Hoochie Coochie, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
11 Dale Storr
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

MONDAY

12 Central Bar Quintet
Central Bar, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead
12-13 Gabriel Latchin Trio
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
12 Denmark Street Big Band
Pizza Express Live, 99 High Holborn, London WC1
12-14 Motown and more
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
12 Chris Ingham (lunchtime)
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
12 Dom Brown
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

13 Abbie Finn Trio
Forum Music Centre, Borough Road, Darlington
13 Dan Reinstein
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

14 Robert Mitchell
Jazz at The Lescar, 303 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield
14-15 Claire Martin
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
14 Chris Ingham (lunchtime)
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
14 Glen Manby
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester

THURSDAY

15 Alan Barnes Octet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
15 Jo Harrop and Jamie McCredie
King's Hall, Armstrong Building, Newcastle University, Queen Victoria Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
15 Sam Every Big Band
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
15 Tom Hill
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
15 Tim and Hattie Whitehead
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
15 Dave Cottle Trio
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea

FRIDAY

16 Mark Toomey Quintet
Traveller's Rest, West Auckland Road, Cockerton, Darlington
16 Jamie Cullum
O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, 211 Shepherd's Bush, London W12
16 Chris Hodgkins
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
16-17 The Brit Funk Association
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
16-23 Acoustic Alchemy
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
16 Georgina Jackson
Guildford Jazz, St Johns Church, Farncombe, Surrey
16 Cormac Loane with Dean Stockdale Trio
Lit & Phil, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
16 Paul Edis
St Cuthbert's Centre, Church Hill, Crook

SATURDAY

17 Paul Edis
Sage Gateshead, St Mary's Square, Gateshead Quays, Gateshead
17 Tony Kofi Tenor Legacy
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
17 Geoff Simkins Trio
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
17 Aydenne Simone
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
17 Ian Shaw
Crazy Coqs, Brasserie Zedel, 20 Sherwood Street, London W1

SUNDAY

18-19 Hamish Stuart
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
18 Dart Valley Stompers
Plymouth Jazz Club, The Royal British Legion Club, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth
18 Jason Moran
Wigmore Hall, 36 Wigmore Street, London W1
18 Tom Seals
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
18 Hot Club du Nord
Hurworth Village Hall, Church Row, Hurworth
18 Back Chat Brass
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

MONDAY

19 Central Bar Quintet
Black Bull, Bridge Street, Blaydon
19-23 Ray Gelato and the Giants
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
19 Paul Edis
Fire Station, High Street West, Sunderland
19 Ian Shaw
Crazy Coqs, Brasserie Zedel, 20 Sherwood Street, London W1

TUESDAY

20 Pigfoot
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
20 Kyriaki Pantelidou and Bradley Johnston
Tyneside Cinema, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
20 Dave Lewis 1 Up
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

21 Jafro
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

THURSDAY

22 Quartet Con Alma
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
22 Mo Pleasure
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY

23 Sambossa
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
23 Radhika de Saram Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
23 Dillie Keane and Barb Jungr
Crazy Coqs, Brassserie Zedel, 20 Sherwood Street, London W1
23 606 Christmas Jam feat Samara
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

MONDAY

26 Liane Carroll's Cold Turkey
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY

27-30 G-Funk
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
27 Alan Barnes Octet
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester

WEDNESDAY

28 Down For the Count Jazz Orchestra
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
28-29 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

THURSDAY

29 Ben Holder Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

FRIDAY

30 Luke Smith
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

SATURDAY

31 Samara New Year's Eve Special
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
31 James Morton
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
31 Ray Gelato and the Giants
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
31 The Brand New Heavies New Year Special
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
31 Ian Shaw
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

JANUARY 2023

SUNDAY

1 Ronnie Scott's Blues Explosion
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
1-7 Scott Hamilton Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

MONDAY

2-3 Osibisa
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY

3 Derek Nash Organ Trio
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
3 Liane Carroll
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

4 Stuart McCallum
Jazz at The Lescar, 303 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield
4-5 Mica Paris
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

FRIDAY

6-7 Denny Illet's Electric Lady Big Band
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, Soho, London W1
6 Freight Train
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
6 Fergus Quill Trio
JATP, Bradford Latvian Club, Bradford

SATURDAY

7 Martin Shaw
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10 Sunday
8 Jorge Rossy Vibes Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
8 The Hopkins Hammond Trio
CICCIC, Memorial Hall, Paul Street, Taunton
8 Some Kinda Wonderful
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

MONDAY

9 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
9 Nimbus Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
9 Central Bar Quintet
Central Bar, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead

TUESDAY

10 The Magpie Trio
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester

Alex Clarke, 12, 13 and 20 January

Airshots
Dec22/Jan23 Radio

Courtney Pine's Global Podcast

BBC RADIO 2 88-91 FM
Big Band Special (Mon, 11pm),
Jamie Cullum show (Tues, 9pm)

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM
J to Z (Sat 5pm)
BBC Young Jazz Musician Highlights (3 Dec)
The best in jazz - past, present and future (10 Dec)
Festive Special (17 Dec)
New Years Eve Special (31 Dec)
The best in jazz - past, present and future (7 Jan)
The best in jazz - past, present and future (14 Jan)
The best in jazz - past, present and future (21 Jan)
The best in jazz - past, present and future (28 Jan)
Jazz Record Requests (Sun, 4pm)
Freeness with Corey Mwamba (Sat, Midnight)

BBC RADIO 6 MUSIC DAB
Gilles Peterson, Sat 3pm

JAZZ FM DAB, Sky, Alexa, smartphone, tablet and online at jazzfm.com
(Mon – Fri) 6am-6.30am Business Breakfast, 6.30am-10am Jazz FM Breakfast with Nigel Williams, 10am-2pm Midmornings with Deb Grant, 2pm-6pm Afternoons with Jamie Crick, 6pm-7pm Jazz FM's Greatest with Mark Walker, 7pm-9pm Dinner Jazz with Mark Walker. (Mon) 9pm-10pm The Performance Series with Ruth Fisher, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Tues) 9pm-10pm Jazz Travels with Sarah Ward, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Weds) . 9pm-10pm The Big Easy with Lil' Koko. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Thurs) 9pm-10pm True Brit with Helen Mayhew. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Fri) 9pm-10pm The Ronnie Scott's Radio Show with Ian Shaw. 10pm-1am Late Night Jazz with Helen Mayhew. (Sat) 6am-9am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 9am-10am Winter Book Club, 10am-2pm Nigel Williams Saturday Show, 2pm-6pm YolanDa Brown on Saturday, 6pm-9pm The Sarah Ward Collection, 9pm-10pm Jazz FM Voices, 10pm-1am The Blueprint with Chris Philips. (Sun) 6am-10am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 10am-1pm Tony Minvielle, 1-3pm Robbie Vincent, 3pm-5pm Sunday Afternoons with John Osborne, 5-7pm Blues and Boogie with David Freeman, 7pm-9pm Clare Teal Big Band Jazz; 9pm Sunday Discovery and 10pm-1am Somethin' Else with Jez Nelson.

ONLINE AND PODCASTS
Courtney Pine's Global Podcast at www.jazz-pod.com and all usual podcast platforms (new episode every Tuesday)
www.soulandjazz.com – Mike Chadwick bi-weekly show; Tony Minvielle, first and third Wednesdays each month; Jazz On The Beach with Adam Sieff, every Wednesday from 10.00pm - 12.00 midnight on DealRadio.co.uk; the 606 Club Straight Ahead Show with Dave Lewis, every Wednesday at 10pm.
Richard Heath's Alt 2 Show
www.radio.lsu.co.uk (9-11pm Thurs);
www.mykindamusic24.com – the Jazz Cavern, Thur 9pm
Dave Self's Sounds of Jazz (4-5pm Tues)
www.tunein.com/radio/Blast-1386-s6837/
www.jazzlondonradio.com
www.cosmicjazz.co.uk with Derek Merrill
www.careradio.org - Alan Steadman's Jazz Waves Sun 11pm and repeated.

REGIONAL RADIO ENGLAND
World Beats , Kane 103.7 FM www.kanefm.com (Thurs, 11am); The Jazz Show, 99.2 Hermitage FM with Peter Varden (Weds, 6pm) on 99.2 FM in north west Leicestershire area and online at www.hermitagefm.com; Jazz Kaleidoscope with Alan Musson on 102.5FM in the Southern Black Country and online at www.thebridgeradio.net (Mon, 9pm); David Freeman jazz show on The Wireless (on DAB in London and Yorkshire, (Weds, 7pm); Slipstreem Worldwide Beats, RadioReverb 97.2 FM in Brighton and radioreverb.com (11am Sunday); Late Night Jazz with Colin Dickenson, Witney Radio 99.9-107.9 FM (Thurs, 10pm)

WALES Radio Cardiff 98.7 FM, Humie Webbe's Jazz Train (Sun, 10am) and Late Night Jazz (Thurs 10-11pm) on www.witney.radio.

SCOTLAND BBC Radio Scotland 92.4-94.7 FM The Jazz Nights with Seonaid Aitken (Sun, 7pm)

NORTHERN IRELAND BBC Radio Ulster 92-95 FM Walter Love (Sun, 7pm), Linley Hamilton (Fri, 10pm)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RTÉ John Kelly's Mystery Train, RTE Lyric FM (Sun-Thurs, 7-9pm); Brian Priestley's That's Jazz, Radio Kerry (Weds, 9-10pm and podcast); Eddie Lee's Kind Of Blue, Radio Sligo online (Weds, 8-9pm, repeated Sun 9-10pm)

Hamish Stuart, 606 Club, London. 18-19 December

WEDNESDAY
11-14 The Stacey Brothers Big Band
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
11 Ilario Ferrari Trio
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

THURSDAY
12 Abbie Finn Trio
Prohibition Bar, Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne
12-14 Paul Hardcastle Junior
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
12 Alex Clarke Quartet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

FRIDAY
13 Alex Clarke Quartet
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
13 Fergus McCreadie Trio
Sheffield Jazz, Playhouse Sheffield, Tudor Square, Sheffield

SATURDAY
14 Jingu Bang
Tetbury Goods Shed Arts Centre, The Old Station Yard, Cirencester Road, Tetbury
14 Katriona Taylor
The Bulls Head Jazz Club, 373 Lonsdale Road, Barnes London SW13

SUNDAY
15 Natalie Williams Soul Family
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
15 The New Washboard Syncopators
Plymouth Jazz Club, The Royal British Legion Club, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth

MONDAY
16-17 Ruby Turner
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY
17 Xhosa Cole
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
Saxophonist, flautist and composer Xhosa Cole is one of the UK's rising jazz stars. Since winning the 2018 Young Jazz Musician of the Year award he's forged a formidable reputation as an accomplished musician and is well worth checking out live.

WEDNESDAY
18 Carmen Souza
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
18 Abbie Finn Trio
Jazz at The Lescar, 303 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield
18 Hannah Horton Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

THURSDAY
19 The Filthy Six
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
19 Kevin Haynes' Grupo Elegua
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
19 Nigel Price
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY
20 James Birkett and Emma Fisk
Lit & Phil, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
20 Joy Ellis Trio
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
20 Shez Raja
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
20 Claire Martin and Callum Au
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1
Brit-jazz legend Claire Martin and Callum Au celebrate the album 'Songs and Stories', performing it as an orchestral concert for the first time.
20 Snowboy and the Latin Section
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
20 Alex Clarke Quartet
Sheffield Jazz, Crookes Social Club, Mulehouse Road, Sheffiled

SATURDAY
21 Bukky Leo
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
21 Tim Garland and Jason Rebello
St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2
21 Kansas Smitty's
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

SUNDAY
22-30 Ian Shaw
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
22 W3 Funk Sessions
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
22 Xhosa Cole
Parrjazz, Liverpool Phil Music Room, Hope Street, Liverpool
22 Mike Hall Sextet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

MONDAY
23-24 Ruby Turner
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY
24 John Turville Quintet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

24 Andrew McCormack Trio
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

WEDNESDAY
25 John Etheridge
FleeceJazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Keeper's Lane, Colchester
25 Nu Civilisation Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
25 Johnny Hunter Quartet
Jazz at The Lescar, 303 Sharrow Vale Road, Sheffield
25 Richard Fairhurst Tribute to Wayne Shorter
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

THURSDAY
26-31 Incognito
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
26 Pasadena Roof Orchestra
Salisbury Playhouse, Malthouse Lane, Salisbury
26 John East
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY
27 Aidan Pope Trio
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
27 Yolanda Charles
Guildford Jazz, Boileroom, Stoke Fields, Guildford
27 Tim Garland and Jason Rebello
Shrewsbury School, The Schools, Shropshire
27 Samara
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY
28 Sax in the City with the Notebenders
B:Music, Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, Symphony Hall, 8 Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham
28 Julian Stringle with Jacqui Hicks
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY
31 Trish Clowes
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
31 Jay Rayner Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
The 'Gaurdian' newspaper's award-winning restaurant critic has another string to his bow – he's also an accomplished pianist. In 2012 he formed a Quartet and in 2022 they became a Sextet, with bassist Robert Rickenberg, saxophonist Dave Lewis, singer Pat Gordon-Smith, guitarist Chris Cobbson and drummer Sophie Alloway. Expect hilarious anecdotes as well as music!

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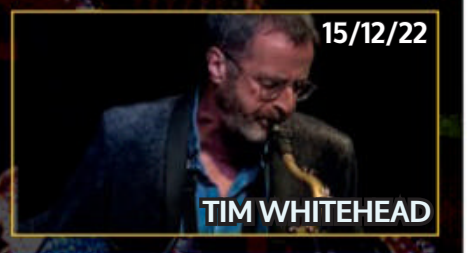

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Letters

Write in to us here at Letters Dept, Jazzwise Magazine, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or email letters@jazzwise.com

The Jazz Centre UK needs a new home… a patron writes

I was saddened to hear of the notice served to The Jazz Centre UK. As a patron of the centre, I would like to express my enthusiasm for the Centre and the organisation as a whole, and really emphasise how I strongly feel that the centre must find a suitable new site. The Jazz Centre is a real pillar in the UK jazz music scene for performers, educators and listeners of jazz music. With a decline in live music venues across the UK owing to the pandemic, and now the rise of energy costs which is threatening real closure of many sites, never before has it been so vital to show support for live music and music as a whole. I hope the Southend City Council can and will assist in finding the Jazz Centre a suitable new home and show their support for jazz in the UK.

Jamie Cullum, via email

Barb's great too…

I always enjoy Stuart Nicholson's articles and the one in *Jazzwise* October 2022 about jazz tributes to Leonard Cohen was up to standard. However, the article merited a paragraph on Barb Jungr who is arguably our best contemporary interpreter of late 20th century songs and whose best recordings cover songs by Cohen and Dylan. **John E Harrison, Chorley, Lancashire via email**

It's *Melody Maker* Toon Time!

Jazzwise is my favourite music magazine. I love Val Wilmer's well informed jazz reminiscences. For 14 years, during the 1960s and 70s, I was contributing caricaturist to *Melody Maker*. I would often visit the Tatty Bogle Club where I sat in on clarinet with saxophonist Eggy Ley and banjoist George Baron, along with Jack Hutton (on trumpet), the then editor of *Melody Maker*. For 10 years I corresponded with Pee Wee Russell. I'm proud owner of one of his abstract paintings. My letters and etcetera are in the National Jazz Archive. I still have much of *MM* archive (although recently, a Canadian collector made off with 150 pieces of my *MM* work from the 1970s.) Yes, I look forward to every issue of *Jazzwise*, even though I'm unlikely to have or hear much of the music reviewed therein. Thanks for my monthly thrill of turning the pages. Sincerely,

James 'Jimmy' Hall Thomson, via email

Wonderful memories Jimmy. Jack Hutton would tell me tales of the Tatty Bogle when I worked for him on Sounds music paper. ***Jon Newey***

Frankly speaking

Reference to the Frank Zappa tribute CD (letters, *Jazzwise*, November 2022) reminds me of another side to the great musician. Jimmy Carl Black, the drummer/vocalist on the debut Mothers of Invention album, *Freak Out!* (1966), was performing with Liverpool's Zappa tribute band, The Muffin Men, in Chester. Announcing the number, 'We're Only In It For The Money', he declared that it "should have been called, *He's Only In It For The Money*… because sure as hell I didn't see any of it".

Jimmy was part American Indian as in The Mothers' song line "The Indian of the Group". A big, wonderfully funny and warm-hearted man, he died in Germany where he resided with his wife Monika in November 2008. A valedictory CD, *Can I Borrow A Couple Of Bucks Until The End Of The Week*, was never issued. He did however leave a message: "Jimmy says Hi to everybody, and he doesn't want anyone to be sad".

Bob Lamb, Chester, via email

CORRECTION: *In the November issue review of Hannes Bennich's album 'When Losing A Dream To Reality', we incorrectly stated that he is Norwegian – he's actually Swedish – and is an alto, not tenor, sax player. Apologies to Hannes.*

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